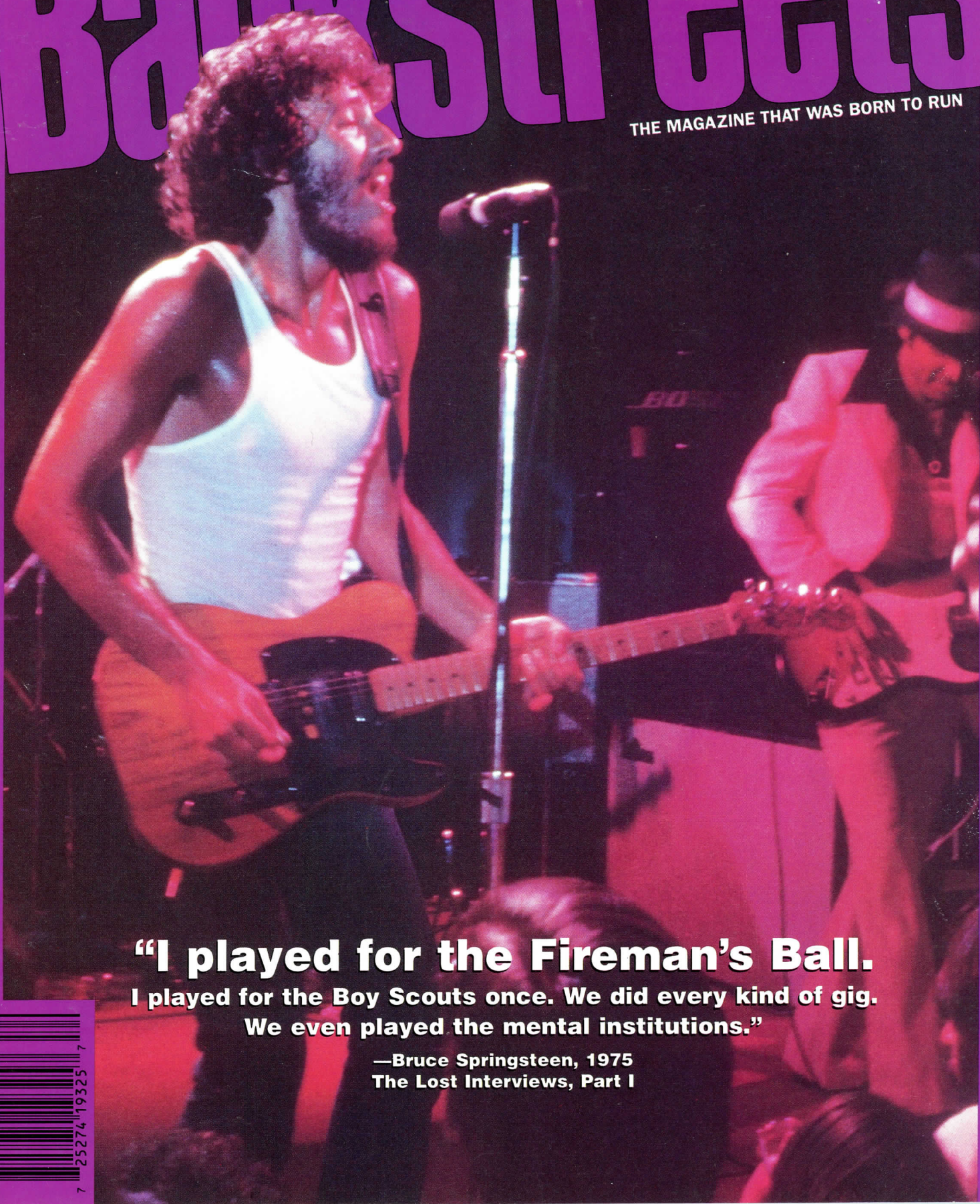


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#57 WINTER 1997

# Backstreets

THE MAGAZINE THAT WAS BORN TO RUN



**"I played for the Fireman's Ball.**

**I played for the Boy Scouts once. We did every kind of gig.**

**We even played the mental institutions."**

—Bruce Springsteen, 1975  
The Lost Interviews, Part I



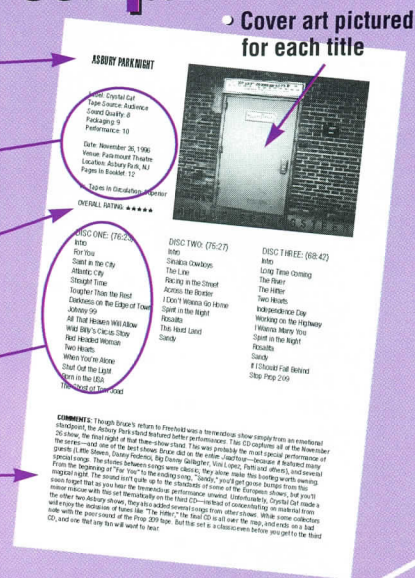


# YOU BETTER NOT TOUCH 3

## The NEW guide to Boss bootlegs on compact disc

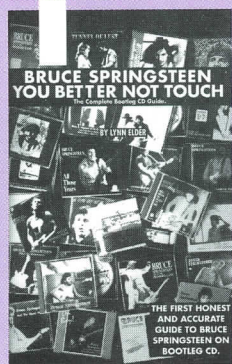


- Nearly 200 new Springsteen titles released between August 1994 and June 1997.
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- Each listing also includes date and location of show; tape source; a comparison of the sound vs. tapes in circulation, and more.
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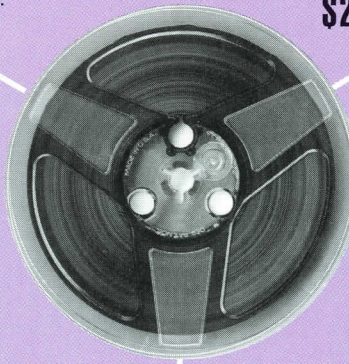


It's finally here! Hot off the presses is *You Better Not Touch Volume Three*, the third book in Backstreets reviewer Lynn Elder's series of guides to the bootleg CDs of Bruce Springsteen. Since the publication of *Volume Two* in the fall of 1994, some two hundred new titles have been released and reviewed here. As usual, the new volume is thorough, honest, and well-illustrated, in the same format as the first two volumes—a sample page is shown above. YBNT3 also includes three appendices, and at a massive 232 pages, it's the biggest one yet by far—coupled with Volumes 1 and 2, you'll have exhaustive advice on virtually every Boss bootleg to date and a resource no collector should be without.

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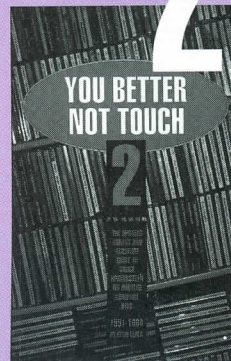


**YBNT1** compiles reviews and ratings for the first 80+ Bruce boot CDs, including quite a few classics, released through 1991.  
By Lynn Elder. **\$10**



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Brenda (left), her husband Jamie (second from right) and friends meet with Bruce, courtesy of Dalmatian Dreams. Jamie, who has been battling cancer, fulfilled a lifelong dream when the Boss arranged to spend time with him after his 1996 Seattle show.

# Backstreets

BORN AND PRINTED IN THE USA

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**CONTENTS**

**WINTER 1997**  
#57 Vol. 15, No. 1  
Play "Downbound Train"

## FEATURES

- JOE SABOVCIK, JUMP A LITTLE HIGHER!**  
A skater born in Czechoslovakia brings his love of Springsteen to the ice. By Dan Johnson. . . . **12**
- JOE GRUSHECKY: COMING HOME**  
A visit with the Houserocker in his hometown of Pittsburgh upon the release of his new album. By T.L. Grimm. . . . **14**
- THE LOST INTERVIEWS, PART ONE**  
Local Boys, Trailer Parks, and the Godfather of Soul: A talk with Springsteen from 1975. . . . **18**
- HIDING ON THE BACK OF THE SHEET**  
A NJ collector makes a significant Springsteen find. By Charles R. Cross. . . . **26**

## DEPARTMENTS

- LETTERS**  
To the editors of *Backstreets*. . . . **4**
- ON THE BACKSTREETS**  
The Incomplete Bruce Springsteen. By Charles R. Cross. . . . **6**
- GREETINGS FROM ASBURY PARK**  
Two tributes to Bruce benefit World Hunger Year. By Robert Makin and Jonathan B. Pont. . . . **8**
- IN THE NEWS**  
Performance and recording notes. . . . **10**
- ON LIPS**  
High school confidential. . . . **11**
- ON COLLECTING**  
Reviews of the latest bootleg CDs. . . . **30**
- ON DISC**  
Bruce lends a hand on benefit CDs. . . . **32**
- CLASSIFIEDS**  
Pen pals, messages, and tapes. . . . **33**

## COVER

**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN**  
1975  
Phil Ceccola Photo

## OFF THE WALL

**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN**  
9/26/97 Long Branch, NJ  
Michelle Bruno Photo



# LETTERS

## RENDEZVOUS

Dear Editor:

I would like to applaud you for printing the article by Ermanno Labianca [*Backstreets* #56]. Over the years many people have written about how Bruce's songs have been a part of their lives. But not many have the ability to articulate these emotions like Mr. Labianca did in his article.

I cannot truly imagine what it must have meant to Mr. Labianca to experience those memorable and intimate encounters he had with Bruce. But since he perfectly expressed his emotions in black and white, he enabled others to enjoy his experience with an added element of admiration and appreciation.

And Mr. Labianca could not have chosen a better last statement to say to Bruce: "I hope next time you come... it'll be a tour that makes you feel as happy and free as this one did." Perfect, Mr. Labianca! Bravo! And Bruce's response is very satisfying: "I'm happy, guys. I'm

totally happy. All I want to say right now is that this thing made me happy."

To witness a true artist perform at his creative best during a time in his life when he is truly happy is something everybody should be lucky enough to be a part of.

Todd M. McKeever  
Ligonier, PA

## YOU AIN'T A BEAUTY

Dear Editor:

I need to get this off my chest to someone who may or may not understand. When I first heard about the Springsteen tribute *One Step Up, Two Steps Back*, the first thing I thought was: Why would I want to hear other people sing Bruce songs? But after reading about it I thought I'd check it out. I must say I'd like my \$20 back. My first thought was correct. I have no interest in the lead singer of the BoDeans "interpreting" "Atlantic City," or the Knack, for God's sake, singing anything. One review of the compilation suggested that the artists for this tribute were pulled out of a hat, and I have to

agree. There is no rhyme or reason to who is singing what on these discs. Anyway, I just wanted to vent a bit, because this was supposed to be such a big deal to Bruce fans and it was even the cover story in the latest *Backstreets*. Perhaps if some other rock 'n' roll musicians (Tom Petty, maybe, someone like that) were to get their bands together and play true versions of the stuff it would be all right, but why do I need to hear these people in particular put their own slant on material which cannot be improved?

Doug Baker  
Columbus, Ohio

## HEY, YOU'RE ALRIGHT

Dear Editor:

I've been a big fan of Bruce and *Backstreets* for years. I just bought the new issue today with the coverage of the *One Step Up, Two Steps Back* 2CD tribute. When I first heard news of this over the summer, I couldn't wait. I was genuinely little-kid excited. My mind reeled at the possibilities: the rarities, the bold reinterpretations, the prospect of learning that artists I never pegged as Bruce Tramps were just like me (in at least one respect).

I instantly set out and made a wish list. And the nominees are: BoDeans ("Two Hearts"); Blue Rodeo ("The Ties That Bind"); Holly Cole Trio ("Point Blank"); Tom Waits ("Stolen Car"); Kiss ("Crush on You"); Steve Earle ("Highway Patrolman"); Cowboy Junkies ("Adam Raised a Cain"); X ("Reason to Believe"); Lou Reed ("Meeting Across the River"); Rocket From the Crypt ("Born to Run"); the Mighty Mighty Bosstones ("Tenth Avenue Freeze-out"); Alejandro Escovedo ("Cadillac Ranch"); Chris Isaak ("I'm on Fire"); the Ramones ("Hungry Heart"); Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers ("Saint in the City"); Elvis Costello ("Because the Night"); Spearhead w/ Tracey Thorne of Everything But the Girl ("Streets of Philadelphia"); Patti Smith ("Prove It All Night"); Sarah McLachlan ("Independence Day"); the Neville Brothers w/ Pops & Mavis Staples ("The Promised Land"); Joe Jackson ("Rosalita"); Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds ("State Trooper"); Paul Westerberg ("Sherry Darling");

Richard Thompson ("Racing in the Street"); Matthew Sweet ("For You"); Morphine ("Spirit in the Night"); Peter Gabriel ("My Beautiful Reward"); Pete Townshend ("Night"); David Bowie ("Roulette").

However, how often do I get my wish?... What I had hoped would be a bridge between old school and new school—of singer-songwriters and gifted interpreters, elder statesfolk and young upstarts, folks expected and not—turned out to be a rickety crosswalk. Still, I'm glad to have the collection that has been released, and I'm glad that Cheryl Pawelski took the time to create this set. The graphics and packaging are superlative, it goes to help a good cause, and there are moments I adore. Bottom line: Just because my idea of what it should be doesn't intersect with hers doesn't mean it's not worthwhile; it's just my opinion. The news of this collection gave me the impetus to dream, and hey, ain't that what Bruce's songs are all about anyway?

Scott Greenberg  
scruf1224@aol.com

## JUSTICE

Dear Editor:

In your interview with Jim Cullen, author of *Born in the USA: Bruce Springsteen and the American Tradition*, in *Backstreets* #56, Cullen says, "You pick up *Tom Joad* and it's got a bibliography, for God's sake. I can't think of another rock 'n' roll record that's ever had that."

Oh, Jim, that's an easy one—and you don't even have to go that far away! Just get a copy of *Little Steven's Freedom, No Compromise or Revolution*. Steve had a bibliography in his records ten years ago.

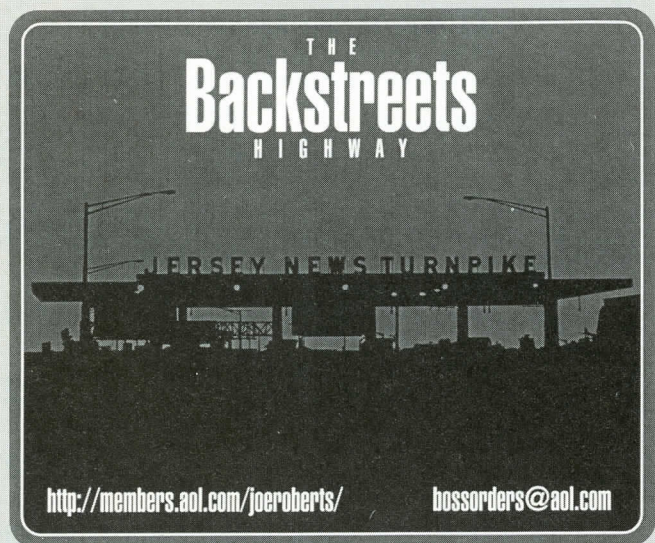
Massimo Benvegna  
Pontelongo, PD, Italy  
maxgnu@mediaplanet.it

## ACROSS THE BORDER

Dear Editor:

I have been a Springsteen fan since 1984, and I am now 20. Unfortunately the only chance that I have had to experience him live has been through my CDs. I'm from Winnipeg, Canada, and we have had some great acts come through this town in the past. Just recently U2 was

## MICE ON A SMOOTH SURFACE



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This brand new Backstreets mousepad lists our e-mail address and the address for the Backstreets Highway website, and pictures the best part of the site—the Jersey News Turnpike, where you can cruise for the latest news. A hard-top surface provides good mouse traction, with the look of Nebraska printed in three colors—red, white and black—on an 8½" x 7" pad.

BACKSTREETS MOUSEPAD.....\$8



here, the Stones are coming back, and Neil Young (who is from Winnipeg) was here not too long ago, as well as many others. I'm wondering why Springsteen's version of a Canadian tour consists of only Toronto and Montreal. It is true that these are big cities, but there are many other mid-sized Canadian cities. I can't just hop in my car and drive eight hours to Minneapolis in the hopes of maybe getting a ticket for \$300. Maybe Springsteen doesn't decide which places to go, but I just wish his promoters—or ours in Canada—would wake up.

Jayson McLean  
Winnipeg MB Canada  
jmclean@escape.ca

## STAND ON IT

Dear Editor:

Thank you, David Billotti, for pointing out exactly what's wrong with this current phase of Springsteen's career (*Letters, Backstreets* #55): for all the talk of getting closer to his audience, in many ways Springsteen has become more isolated as an artist than ever before.

Sure, it was great to spend an "intimate" evening with Bruce on the *Joad* tour, but I kept thinking about how many people weren't getting to hear all those important messages. And it wasn't because those folks couldn't all fit inside a small theater. It was also because Bruce's new music, however beautiful, isn't as accessible to a wide audience.

And let's talk about those lucky people who did make it into the theaters. How many of them changed their opinions or gained new insight and inspiration about what Bruce and his music stand for? I believe that at least some of them did, but the proportion of those people who made up the "moron factor" in the *Backstreets* tour coverage (as well as those who just wish Bruce would stay exactly as he was in '74, or '76, or '78, or... pick your year) seems no different than what you'd encounter at one of Springsteen's arena or stadium shows. In other words, just like with the larger crowds, some people got it and some people didn't—but at least with the larger crowds there was a better chance of larger numbers of people getting it.

So, as David so eloquently put it, making the "loud noise" still does matter! This new folk phase is particularly frustrating since it was preceded by "Streets of Philadelphia." That record, one of his biggest hits ever, renewed hope that Springsteen could continue to be a strong, positive voice in popular music. It was also exciting because its hip-hop beat brought some new people into his audience: younger people and, more significantly, darker people. It signaled that maybe Bruce really could build a more diverse, united audience that could help break down the barriers preventing us from being the society we could be.

That kind of promise is something that no white rock 'n' roller since the '50s has kept. It's also the kind of promise that anyone who seriously wants to be a part of "rock 'n' roll future" needs to help fulfill.

Shawn Poole  
Philadelphia, PA

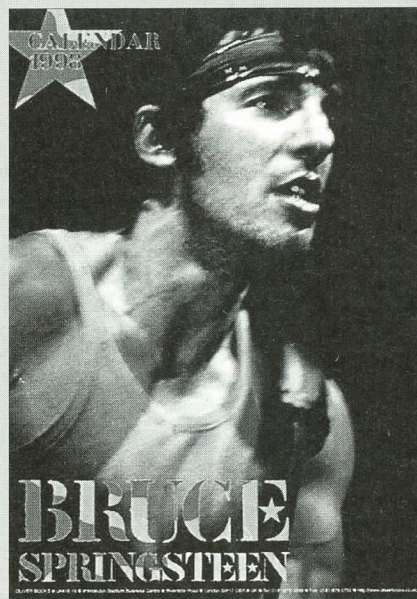
## WHEN YOU'RE ALONE

Dear Editor:

*Nebraska*, as powerful as it was, was the one album of Springsteen's I would not play often, nor did many of my family and friends who were also Springsteen fans. Then I saw Bruce and the E Street Band play in Syracuse in 1985, where he played a song that on first impression sounded like a new one, or perhaps a cover. It was raw and grabbed your emotions like the best of Bruce's songs, and it took me a while to realize it was "Reason to Believe." Later that night, he played another song I found hard to recognize, but it too was off *Nebraska*—"State Trooper." These songs were magnetic and caught my attention from the start. They were revelations.

As soon as I got home from that concert, I put *Nebraska* on the turntable to listen to those songs again and to hear what I had originally missed. But the magic I heard in those songs from the concert was not on the vinyl. Afterwards, *Nebraska* became that Bruce album I respected a whole lot but never listened to that much. Eventually I was able to acquire a few live tapes from the *BUSA* tour, which included "Atlantic City" and "Nebraska." Again, these live ver-

# 1998 SPRINGSTEEN CALENDAR



The official Bruce Springsteen calendar for the new year is out now from the UK! This one is from the same company we've been carrying for years, with a huge shot of the Boss for every month of the year—mostly live photos of Bruce and his guitar from the past three tours. The European calendar that was also offered in '96 and '97 won't be returning this year, so this is the only Bruce calendar planned for 1998. Start your year off right!

1998 SPRINGSTEEN CALENDAR.....\$15

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sions held so much more power for me than those on *Nebraska*, and with the release of *Live 1975-85* imminent at the time, I was hoping a large helping of live *Nebraska* songs would be served up for me to enjoy. The live versions of the *Nebraska* songs are much different from the album versions, so I thought they would be logical choices for the live box. I was disappointed but happy to get what I did, especially "Reason to Believe."

A few years later, frustrated that no more live material from *Nebraska* had surfaced as b-sides or on a second live set I always thought was destined to follow, I found, to my utter disbelief, an "import" CD entitled *Nebraska Live*. Here was a compilation I had dreamed about for years, and whoever it was who finally put it together was a certified and sanctified genius, a firm belief I held even before I listened to the CD.

The nuances the E Street Band adds to the songs make all the difference. I listen to this CD more than most of Bruce's legitimate releases. Sure, the songs are still stark, but the additional instrumental accompaniment

adds a texture to the songs that makes them much more "listenable." I am not talking about a pop-hit mentality, but the songs need to provide some sort of melody and have some flesh, and the additional instruments provide an aesthetic contrast that gives the listener something to grab on to in a musical context while the content of the song grips the mind.

Skipping ahead a few albums, *The Ghost of Tom Joad* struck me in much the same manner as *Nebraska* did, and still does. It is an album of terrific songs with some of Bruce's best lyrics ever, but I find myself gravitating to five of the songs off *Joad*. I listen to these five frequently—the title track, "Straight Time," "Youngstown," "Dry Lightning," and "Across the Border"—and coincidentally, these are the songs on the album that feature other musicians. Strong, powerful musicianship does not have to detract from the lyrics. It can supplement the lyrics and should draw the listener to them ("The River" immediately comes to mind).

Dare I say it? I want music I

**Continued page 34**



# The Incomplete Bruce Springsteen

By Charles R. Cross

**W**hen the sheet music publisher Columbia Pictures Publications decided to issue an anthology of the songs of Bruce Springsteen in 1986, they chose the title *Bruce Springsteen Complete*. The piano version of this songbook is as thick as the Seattle phone book (and, incidentally, this version is out of print, commanding prices as high as \$100 on the collector's market). At first glance it seems monolithic, like a Bible of Bruce. As the cover boasts, it contains all the songs from the first seven albums, plus 17 others that were either written or co-written by Springsteen. If you saw this book on display in a music store, it would be one of the largest books devoted to a single songwriter, dwarfing others by contemporary rock musicians. At 500 pages, *Bruce Springsteen Complete* is so thick that the binding on every copy I've ever seen in circulation has cracked and come undone.

While it's hard to fault this collection, which was sought out by fans both for the sheet music and for lyrics previously unavailable, few songbooks are so inappropriately titled. It's not really the publisher's fault; when it comes to writing songs, few artists are as prolific as Bruce Springsteen, and few people in the general public are even remotely aware that Springsteen writes songs at the rate that Chevy builds cars.

*Bruce Springsteen Complete* contains the 76 officially released songs that Springsteen had put out on his first seven albums (through *Born in the USA*), plus the 17 other b-sides and such that Springsteen felt good enough to publish. Even in 1986, collectors were well aware that those official songs were but a drop in the bucket. It was often suggested in the early '80s—sometimes in this magazine—that Springsteen had so many outtakes and unreleased songs that you could easily say that

each released album represented only half the songs recorded during the full sessions.

In the last decade, as more outtakes have leaked out and more information on unreleased songs has been discovered, those estimates seem ridiculously low. Last year, enterprising bootleggers released a 21-CD set titled *The Lost Masters* that added another six dozen previously unknown titles to the Bruce Springsteen canon, and this just from a period of four years of recording sessions. Further research—some of it done by the editors and contributors of this magazine—has continued to add titles to the list of known songs written by Bruce Springsteen in the last 25 years.

Between the 1989 first hard-back publication of *Backstreets: Springsteen, The Man and His Music* and the 1992 issue of the paperback edition, more than 60 new song titles were added to our sessionography, including never-before-heard-of songs like "Shootout in Chinatown" and "Killer's Paradise," both titles of songs written around the time of *Born to Run*. Since that 1992 *Backstreets: Springsteen, The Man and His Music* paperback, at least another 120 titles have been discovered either from lyric sheets, copyright filings, interviews, or best yet have actually been found on tape (and in many cases released as bootlegs).

Most of the newly discovered titles are at present no more than that: simply titles of songs found through some document or lyric sheet, which may or may not mean that they were actually recorded. But as in the case of the many songs that debuted on *The Lost Masters* CD series, there have been a plethora of previously unknown songs that Springsteen has indeed committed to tape. And what we know about (or have heard) now is still probably but a fraction of the work that Springsteen has done.

Mike Pfeifer's recent discovery of a lyric sheet that links *Born to Run* and *Darkness on the Edge of*

*Town* (see story this issue, "Hiding on the Back Sheets") is one of the biggest surprises of the past few years. That "Darkness on the Edge of Town" was written as early as 1975 may shock a few fans, and what's equally important about the discovery of this lyric sheet is that it gives us another seven titles to add to the pile of Springsteen songs we know about.

While the significance of each of these single discoveries—from Pfeifer's lyric sheet to *The Lost Masters* bootleg CDs—is a hot topic among Springsteen fans, of greater significance is what they all say about Springsteen, the writer. Though we have always known he was prolific, we had no idea just how prolific he was. Few musicians write as many songs in their lifetime as Bruce appears to have crafted in the golden decade between 1972 and 1982.

That period has become legendary to collectors for Springsteen's prodigious output, but there's no reason to think that Springsteen hasn't been just as prolific ever since. Tighter security measures were taken over the next decade to prevent leaks—leaks being precisely the reason we know about so many outtakes from the late '70s and early '80s. For years now the only tracks specifically known to be considered for *Tunnel of Love* were those that wound up on the album, plus the sole b-side, "Lucky Man." But it's hard to believe that Springsteen wasn't considering additional material, since that's the way he's worked from the beginning. Only this year have we heard about an additional song title from the *Tunnel* sessions—and for now it's only a title—"The Honeymooners." Judging by Springsteen's track record, it's probably the tip of the iceberg.

Of course, it's not just the quantity, it's the quality of Springsteen's work that will no doubt get him inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame next

year. While no collector I know has ever heard "Shootout in Chinatown" (at least not anybody who is talking), one need only look as far as "The Fever" or "Loose Ends" to find tremendous pop songs that have never been officially released by Springsteen but deserve their place in the pop pantheon nonetheless.

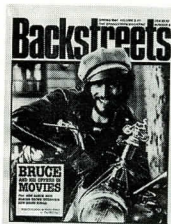
Press reports tell us that Springsteen and his associates are working on a book of lyrics to be published sometime in the next two years that will collect all his released songs and some of his unreleased classics. The physical limitations of book printing and binding no doubt will limit this to better-known songs, and "Shootout in Chinatown" will probably be left out (as maybe it should be; we have no idea if this particular song is a "Jungland"-style number or a "Man's Job" throwaway). Of course, I can barely wait for a copy of this new collection, hoping that when I first leaf through the pages, I'll find yet another piece in the puzzle that continues to evolve as the saga of Bruce Springsteen, songwriter. This time around, though, I hope someone has better sense than to title this volume "complete."

\* \* \*

**OUT OF WORK?:** *Backstreets* is looking for someone to fill a new editorial staff position. If you happen to live in the Seattle area (or are a computer wiz that can telecommute) and have an interest in full-time magazine work, you might be just the one. We're looking for someone to help put the magazine together, so publication production skills and knowledge of Quark are important as well as writing and editing experience. And of course, an interest in Bruce Springsteen with some knowledge to boot—but having won the *Backstreets* Trivia Contest is not a requirement. No phone calls, please; send resume to: *Backstreets*, PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115. 📧



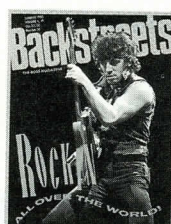
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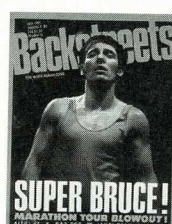
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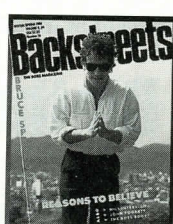
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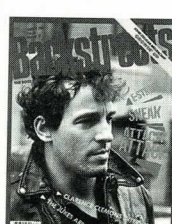
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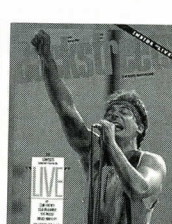
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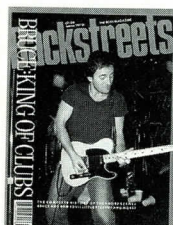
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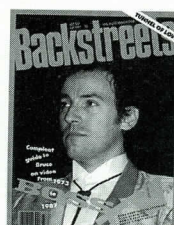
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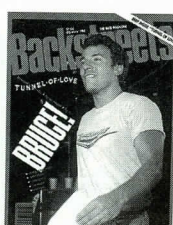
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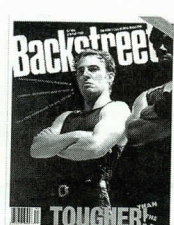
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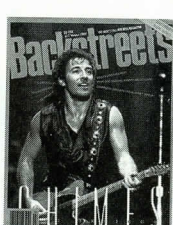
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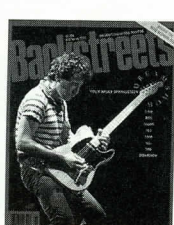
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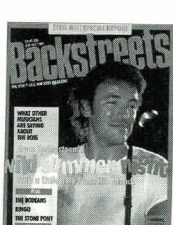
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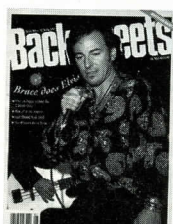
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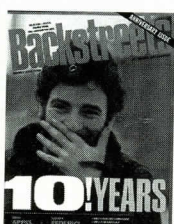
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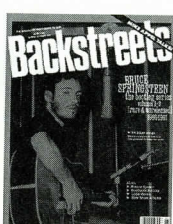
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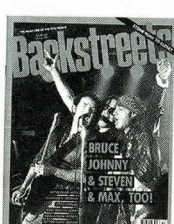
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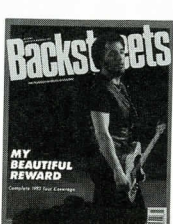
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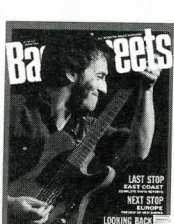
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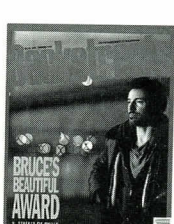
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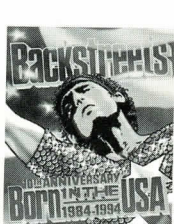
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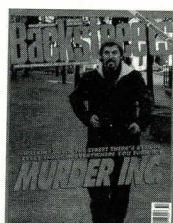
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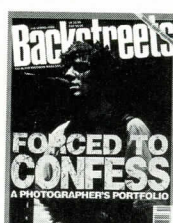
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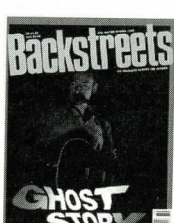
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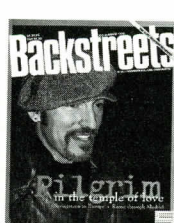
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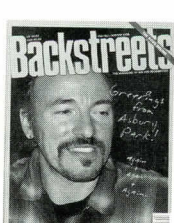
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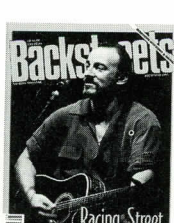
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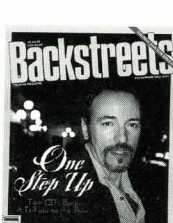
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W.H.Y.? Because they like you

# Happy Birthday to Bruce

By Robert Makin

Imagine throwing a birthday party for someone and they don't show up! You'd be pretty bummed, right? Or maybe you'd be like that woman in New York, who recently went ahead with her wedding reception even though the groom stood her up.

The vibe of the release party for the tribute disc *One Step Up, Two Steps Back: The Songs of Bruce Springsteen* on September 23 at the Motown Cafe in New York—which also served as a birthday bash for Bruce Springsteen—was kind of a cross between the two. Expectations were high that Bruce would stop by and jam even though the evening's beneficiary, World Hunger Year, kept saying he wouldn't.

By the time Southside Johnny, Bobby Bandiera and three of the Miami Horns closed the show with the best of about a dozen musical sets, everyone was convinced that they had a good time even though Bruce stayed home to celebrate with his family.

In addition to sparse but furious takes on "Trapped Again," "I Don't Want To Go Home" and "The Fever"—one of several tunes played that evening also featured on the tribute disc—Southside revealed that he'll be playing the Jersey Shore on New Year's Eve. This was big news, considering he hasn't played there in nearly two years.

"I love doing charity gigs like



Southside Johnny, Bobby Bandiera and the horns join in the salute to Springsteen at the Motown Cafe.

this, because it's a very different kind of energy," Southside told *Backstreets* backstage after the show. "But after 30 years, I'm fed up with the music industry. I love making music and sing every chance I get. But I don't want to give my money to people whom I despise."

This worthy evening began with speeches by representatives from EMI Records, the folks who released *One Step Up, Two Steps Back*, and the Motown Cafe, one of the sites that has turned West 57th Street into an adult Disney World. Bill Ayres, W.H.Y.'s co-founding executive director, then

accepted a check for \$25,000.

Ayres explained how Bruce has donated the same amount every year to the New York-based organization, which combats poverty and hunger with such programs as Reinvesting in America. The national campaign unites the efforts of regional and local poverty and hunger groups.

"Bruce once told me, 'If my father had something like that, his life probably would have been a lot easier,'" Ayres said. "Bruce hasn't forgotten where he came from. He had to struggle, and now he wants to give something back."

Despite hearing that Bruce would be a no-show, the crowd roared when the music kicked in with Joe D'Urso & Stone Caravan. The New York-based, very Bruce-like group romped through their updated version of "Johnny Bye Bye." The Caravan, which served as the house band for the night, then did a spot-on version of "Used Cars." When I closed my eyes, I swore I was hearing Springsteen & the E Street Band.

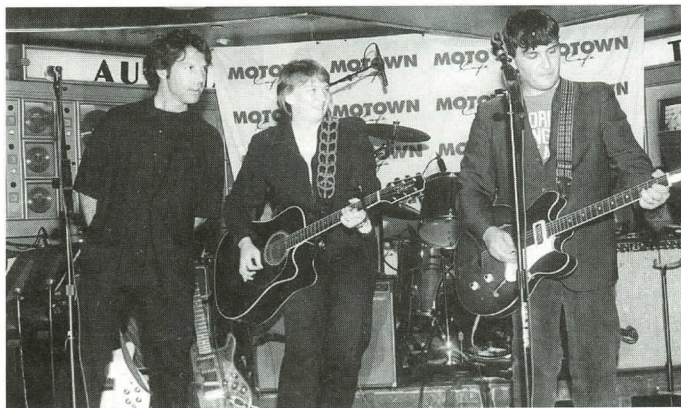
Speak of the devil, E Street drummer Max Weinberg joined in the fun to help Robbin

Thompson, Bruce's old Steel Mill buddy, bop heavily on "Pink Cadillac." Thompson's all-too-brief set didn't include "Guilty," the Steel Mill tune he offered on the tribute disc.

The evening then got rootsy. Dusty Wright turned "Mary, Queen of Arkansas," into a Memphis-bound train. The shuffle featured some fine slide work by a fellow named Dave Waters. Aram offered his country-fried version of "Something in the Night," and he joined in on "My Beautiful Reward" with the Bumpin' Ugliest Cheryl Pawelski, who produced the *One Step Up* CD, plus some tasty accordion by Cracker's Kenny Margolis.

The Smithereens' garage-rock take on "Downbound Train" was up next. The Jersey favorites also captured the spirit of John Coltrane, who shares a birthday with Bruce, with an unexpectedly jazzy interlude.

Like he usually does with such great songwriters, Richie Havens transformed Bruce's "Streets of Philadelphia" into his own tune. Havens' version of "Lives in the Balance," Jackson Browne's expose of Latin America's mean streets, was equally intense.



My Beautiful Reward: Aram, Cheryl Pawelski, and Joe D'Urso.



Afterwards Havens told *Backstreets*, "Bruce is one of the three greatest songwriters in the world. There's Bob Dylan, Jackson Browne and Bruce Springsteen. These guys are writing my history book. They enrich us. The connection is communication, not show business."

Well, Ben E. King communicated with his version of "4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)," which Pawelski specifically requested for *One Step Up*. As I recalled my prom, I felt the kind of chill that rips through the boardwalk in December. My spine thawed as the crowd joined the Rock and Roll Hall of Famer for a sing-along of his all-time great anthem, "Stand by Me." Smithereen Dennis Diken, who produced the aforementioned tribute track, was in his glory playing drums for King, one of his greatest musical heroes.

Pawelski wasn't able to secure an acoustic version of "The Fever" by Southside and Bobby for the disc, but they did an even better version at the Motown Cafe. Miami Horns Eddie Manion (saxophone), Marc Pender (trumpet) and Richie "La Bamba" Rosenberg (trombone), all presently in the Max Weinberg Seven on *Late Nite with Conan O'Brien*, made a surprise appearance. As the horns added muscle to "Trapped Again," the reunion bid goodbye to summer and hello to future Jukes possibilities, such as this New Year's Eve.

Within minutes, nearly every arm in the house was raised during the chorus of "I Don't Want To Go Home." The party tune, written by Miami Steve Van Zandt, made me realize why so many people had come to celebrate Bruce's birthday without him. Asbury Park, its music, and the memories they represent mean a lot to them.

Perhaps by supporting organizations like World Hunger Year, Springsteen and the folks who gathered to pay tribute to him on disc and live, will help Asbury and other cities like it return to their glory days. At the very least, the one in four children who go hungry in New York City every night might benefit from this evening. With or without Bruce, the birthday bash was memorable and inspiring, because of the compassion and commitment that went into it. 🍌

# Hungerthon '97 Raises Needed Cash

By Jonathan Pont

**W**orld Hunger Year has Bruce Springsteen's blessing, and his friends have his songbook. The charity's annual Hungerthon featured a benefit concert, held on November 20 at New York's Beacon Theater, billed as "A Springsteen Tribute." It was the second such Bruce-oriented benefit in two months for World Hunger Year and raised \$92,000 (Springsteen and Kaman Music donated a couple of autographed acoustic guitars to be auctioned as well).

The concert complemented the "birthday party" held in September at the Motown Café. This time, more performers got a chance to showcase their takes on Springsteen's own songs. Most acts played three or four songs, combining originals with old favorites, many of the latter included on *One Step Up*, *Two Steps Back*.

Emcees included New York radio personality Dan Neer and World Hunger Year co-founder Bill Ayres. Paul Cebal and the Milwaukeeans led off. Their interpretation of "One Step Up" featured a Jamaican feel, aided by percussion, accordion and 12-string acoustic guitar. While fans had no problem recognizing the song, the rendition was still one of the more interesting reworkings of the evening.

Tom Chapin, long involved with World Hunger Year, followed with "My Hometown." Chapin's choice fit perfectly. Backed by a small ensemble, Chapin played the autoharp and delivered the most heartfelt set of the evening—even though it consisted of only one song. He preceded his performance by calling Springsteen "a force for good in this country."

The next set was a bit of a mixed bag, with performers coming on and off the stage quickly. With no rhythm or continuity, the songs began to sound like a multi-disc player set on shuffle. Backed by Joe D'Urso and Stone Caravan, Dusty Wright played

"Mary Queen of Arkansas," a courageous if unusual choice given that Springsteen himself has probably never played it. Aram followed with a gritty "Something in the Night." Finally, D'Urso himself dished up a Spencer Davis-like "Johnny Bye Bye," a performance that may have gotten the attention of the King himself with D'Urso's abundant infusion of anger and grief.

The next set was easily one of the evening's best. John Wesley Harding, backed by a band he referred to as his Union Men, combined humor, warmth, and range, throwing a Bob Dylan song into the mix for good measure. "Jackson Cage" was Hard-

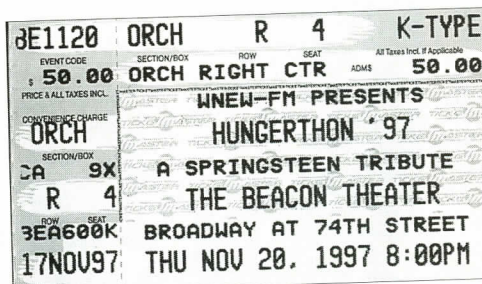
months in advance!"), and "Quarter to Three."

After intermission, the Max Weinberg Seven kicked things off with a largely instrumental set, starting with a horn-driven "Ramrod" and "From Small Things (Big Things One Day Come)" and a non-Bruce cover of "I Do." Nils Lofgren joined them and delivered another highlight set, playing great guitar throughout. The lyrics of the Beatles "Anytime at All" were set to the music of "Seeds," with Lofgren's muddy guitar riff leading the way.

Warmed up, Lofgren and Weinberg delivered a knockout performance of "Wreck on the Highway." Gone was the River-era country feel: it was replaced by a more uptempo and mainstream sound. Lofgren sang an emotionally charged vocal then played a stunning solo in the jam that concluded the song. Max Weinberg, too, played with flair and gave the song a real kick. Wein-

berg showed that an E Street Band reunion will benefit from the fact that he has been playing five nights a week for the past four years. Lofgren concluded with his own "Shine Silently." Phoebe Snow was a surprise guest on "Fade Away."

Southside Johnny played the last set. All the usual suspects lined up for a workout: "This Time It's For Real," "The Fever," "I Don't Want to Go Home," and "Havin' a Party." It was vintage Southside. He looked slender and fit, and he sang with his usual command and good-times determination. The lights came up during "Havin' a Party," leading to quite a few frowns and people heading for the exits. Many fans grumbled afterward about the lack of big-name artists, and some compared the evening's performances, perhaps unfairly, to 1992's Bob Dylan Tribute Concert. But such a huge undertaking for Springsteen may be premature. In the meantime, if people want to get together to make some noise for a good cause, there is no harm done. 🍌



ing's contribution to the covers album, and he performed the reworked acoustic version with a real understanding of the song's complexities (Harding declined repeated requests to play it at his own show at New York's Mercury Lounge two weeks before). In addition to two originals (including one at Bruce's request and a new song, "Window Seat"), Harding included "Tryin' to Get to Heaven" from Bob Dylan's new album. File it under a Bruce-influenced artist performing a new song by an artist who influenced Bruce. East Village guitarist Willie Nile joined the Union Men on this one, which also included Smithereens' drummer Dennis Diken and violin player Deni Bonet.

Gary U.S. Bonds closed the first set with a set of obvious but energetic choices. Looking fit and singing with plenty of verve, Bonds treated the audience to romps through "Jole Blon," "New Orleans," "This Little Girl" ("I gotta thank Bruce for that sucker," Bonds said. "I paid the rent with that one. In fact, I paid two



A Dylan family affair

## Mr. Springsteen goes to Washington

By Christopher Phillips

**W**hile Bruce Springsteen's tag of "the new Bob Dylan" may be ancient history, the link between the two artists is only gaining strength. In recent years, Springsteen has inducted Dylan into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, shared a mic with him for a duet at the Hall of Fame's opening concert, and even shared his Dylan impression with the crowd at a few of the *Tom Joad* shows.

Winning the favor of the Boss seems to run in the family, as Jakob Dylan has a fan in Springsteen as well. In March of '97, Bruce took advantage of a break in the *Tom Joad* tour schedule to join Jakob and his band, the Wallflowers, onstage at a Jersey Shore club. Bruce has been lying fairly low since his tour ended in May, but he has stepped out to perform a song or two—and his two most high-profile appearances of late happen to involve each of the Dylans.

Most recently, Bruce paid tribute to the elder Dylan for a crowd that included the President of the United States. Bob Dylan was one of the honorees at this year's Kennedy Center Honors, held in early December in Washington D.C. Recipients of the medals, given by President Clinton at this year's 20th annual event, are honored for lifetime achievement in the performance arts and contribution to American culture. As his salute, Springsteen took the stage to perform "The Times They are a-Changin'" and spoke of Dylan's power in the 1960s: "The yearning in America for an open and just society just exploded. Bob Dylan had the courage to stand in that fire and capture the sound of that explosion. It was a beautiful call to arms." The ceremony is scheduled to air December 26 on CBS.

In September—also for a nationally televised event, this one broadcast live—Springsteen performed with the Wallflowers at the MTV Video Music



Bruce, bottle in hand, jamming with Bobby Bandiera, 9/26.

Awards. The song was one of Jakob's, "One Headlight," but Springsteen sang at least half of the song and took the guitar lead to boot. Some keen-eared fans have pointed out that "One Headlight" is simply a sped-up version of Springsteen's "Independence Day," and with that Springsteen title actually in the lyrics of the younger Dylan's song, a conscious tribute doesn't seem out of the question. Whatever the case, Bruce got to claim some of the song for his own on this occasion, and it was a stunning performance.

Springsteen's club appearances have been few and far between this year. His first one on the Jersey Shore since the Wallflowers show at Tradewinds came in late September. After watching

Bobby Bandiera and his band for about an hour on a Friday night at Cheers in Long Branch, Bruce jumped on stage for two songs. Two long songs, though, as they stretched out and jammed on "Mustang Sally" and "Lucille." Springsteen played another New Jersey gig on November 15, but this one was private: the wedding of friends in Colt's Neck. The event was actually a small reunion of sorts, as the wedding band was the Max Weinberg Seven; Springsteen joined them for a half-hour of cover songs.

With only a handful of appearances from Springsteen, the past several months may be just as notable for what he *didn't* play. News of possible benefit shows at the Paramount in Asbury Park had the rumor mill churning at

full speed, though nothing panned out. A Wallflowers gig, also at Asbury Park's Convention Hall, seemed to be a prime occasion for the Boss to make a showing. According to reports, Bruce was there—even waiting in the wings to go onstage—but decided at the last minute not to join in when the level of "Broooocing" got a bit too high.

With so much down-time this year it's likely that Springsteen has been spending some time in the studio. Several sources suggest that he has been working on a track for an upcoming Woody Guthrie tribute. Drummer Gary Mallaber told his hometown newspaper that he had been recording material with Bruce for a new album.

Mallaber has played with Bruce before, drumming on both *Lucky Town* and *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, but a more unusual collaboration is in the works. According to *allstar*, Bruce is planning on working with the producer Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds for at least a single. Babyface's work with Eric Clapton was mentioned by *allstar* as similar to what Springsteen wanted to do. The result of that previous pairing, Clapton's "Change the World," was co-written by Tommy Sims, Springsteen's bassist from the '92-93. After many years with the same team behind the board, Babyface is an unexpected choice; when the last *Backstreets* readers poll took suggestions for a different producer, his name was certainly not one that came up. Unless you count the tenth most popular response: "Anyone but Jon Landau." ➔

- 9/4/97  
**One Headlight**  
Radio City Music Hall - NYC, NY
- 9/26/97  
**Mustang Sally**  
**Lucille**  
Cheers - Long Branch, NJ
- 12/7/97  
**The Times They are a-Changin'**  
Kennedy Center - Wash., D.C.

MICHELLE BRUNO PHOTO

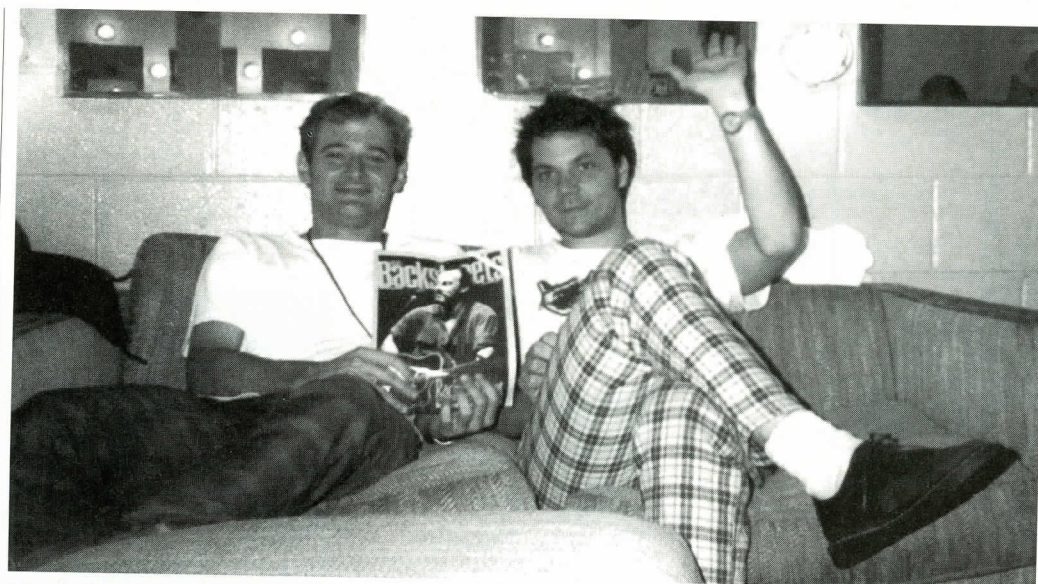


## THIRTY YEARS OUT:

For the first time since he graduated, Springsteen attended a Freehold High School Class of 1967 reunion: the big 3-0. At a Holiday Inn in Tinton Falls, Bruce and about 60 other classmates sat around "talking about the old times"—though he was probably the only one signing autographs. Springsteen, who attended with Patti Scialfa, was reportedly his usual gracious self when it came to photos, and he also joined in the class picture. . . . And speaking of Springsteen's glory days, the powers-that-be at the Little League Hall of Excellence decided to induct Bruce this year, based on his ballplaying as a Freehold youth. Another former Little League player, Decathalon champion Dan O'Brien, shared this year's honors.

## AS THE BAND PLAYS:

Roy Bittan has produced the new self-titled CD from singer-songwriter Catie Curtis, on EMI/Guardian. Bittan also plays keyboards on the record, and if you got to check out one of Curtis's recent shows, you may have had the pleasant surprise of seeing the Professor onstage in her band as well, on accordion and baby grand. . . . Another E Streeter-turned-producer, Garry Tallent, will be back on stage as well, and with old friends. Tal-



Wilco's John Stirratt and Jeff Tweedy kick back with their favorite magazine.

lent takes on the illustrious title of Asbury Juke for at least a few shows, playing bass with Southside Johnny at the New Year's Eve show on the Shore as well as a few other surrounding dates. The two played together as far back as Dr. Zoom & the Sonic Boom and the Sundance Blues Band in the early '70s. . . . And quite recently, as well: September's Jimmie Rodgers Jamboree in Cleveland sounded almost like a Jersey Shore homecoming. Performers included Garry Tallent, Southside Johnny, and Max Weinberg, playing together in various configurations along with the Delevantes, Steve Forbert and Alejandro Escovedo. The event was hosted by Robert San-

telli, *Backstreets* Associate Editor and Education Director at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. . . . As Scotty Moore and D.J. Fontana, Elvis Presley's original guitarist and drummer, teamed up to promote their *All the King's Men* CD, they played four shows at the Bottom Line backed on drums by Weinberg. The shows were recorded for a 1998 live album, and a film of the highlights may be released. . . . Nils Lofgren, contender for the "hardest working man in show business" title, continues to gig non-stop, with recent shows around the Northeast. Lofgren also returned once again as Musical Director at November's Cable Ace Awards in Los Angeles. . . . Another "mission from God" is in the works, as the upcoming movie *Blues Brothers 2000* will actually hit theatres in 1998. The movie will climax with a jam by what the producers call "the greatest blues band ever assembled"; Clarence Clemons and Gary U.S. Bonds were among those greats as the jam was filmed in Toronto this fall.

**IN MY ARMS:** Springsteen has chosen to leave "Back in Your Arms Again," as heard in the *Blood Brothers* documentary, unreleased for the time being. But singer-songwriter Charlie Starkweather (real name: Scott Fralick) knew a good thing when he heard it. Starkweather included a cover of the outtake on his 1997 album, *Where I'm Calling From*, changing the words to "my arms" rather than "your arms." For more

on his self-released album, which has a *Nebraska*-inspired cover to go with his moniker, call (509) 535-3237 or write 3001 E. 34th Ave., Spokane, WA 99223. . . . "Streets of Philadelphia" has been Conniffed on *I Love Movies*, orchestra-and-chorus master Ray Conniff's latest record. This salute to well-known movie themes is, frighteningly enough, Conniff's 100th album. Let's hope he doesn't decide to do *I Love Cars* next. . . . Siri's Svalde Band, a Norwegian jazz group, includes a cover of "Fire" on their latest album, *Necessarily So*. Contact Sonor Records, PO Box 332, N-7001 Trondheim, Norway.

**LIVING PROOF:** In one of the more unusual name-drops in recent memory, Springsteen's name comes up in *Walking to Mercury*, a novel by Starhawk, published by Bantam. One passage depicts a woman struggling to find the right man to father her child: "Who was good enough? God himself, maybe. Or possibly Bruce Springsteen.... Maybe she should write him a letter.... 'Dear Bruce, I'm a great fan of yours and I wonder if you would mind sending me a teaspoon of semen, packed in ice.' If only there were a Famous Rock Stars Sperm Bank! She could have one by Bruce, a boy, of course, kind of rough and ready and good at fixing cars.... And just to round things off and for old times' sake, a pair of frizzy-haired Jewish twins with whiny voices by Bob Dylan." Maybe her other boyfriends couldn't pass the test. 🐾

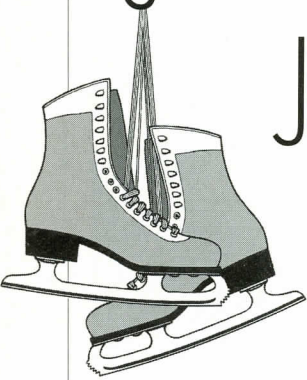
## IN THE BLESSED NAME OF BRUCE:

What's in a name? Well, at right are just a few of the staggering number of possible arrangements of the letters in "Bruce Frederick Joesph Springsteen." Sure, a few of them don't make much sense, but they do provide food for thought: bright fun often does proceed jerk creepiness, after all. These and many other B.F.J.S. anagrams—some even less savory—were found using the website at <www.genius2000.com/anagram.html>. Thanks to <tverga@aol.com> (or is that "avert clam goo"? ) for the yuks.

Rich designer of pre-pubescent jerks  
His king's proper referenced subject  
Gross, pre-pubescent (if enriched) jerk  
He's superb, decrepit jerks enforcing  
Pre-pubescent jerk is rich of genders  
Proper jerk, big fur-chested niceness  
Fiercest superbeings chop nerd jerk  
Sure, rednecks perspire, fetching job  
Frightened, superb, nice corpse jerks  
Superb retching proceeds fine jerks  
Rich rejected funkiness begs proper  
Gosh! Subscripted jerkin preference  
Rich superbeings perfect nerd jokes  
Bright fun proceeds jerk creepiness  
Junk preferences prescribe dog shit  
Perfect superbeings shod nicer jerk  
Fetching, superb, reprocessed jerkin  
Cheers! Refined king's proper subject  
Bright creep processes refined junk  
Jerk referencing subscripted hopes  
He's perfect, considering superb jerk



# Joe Sobovcik, JUMP A LITTLE HIGHER!



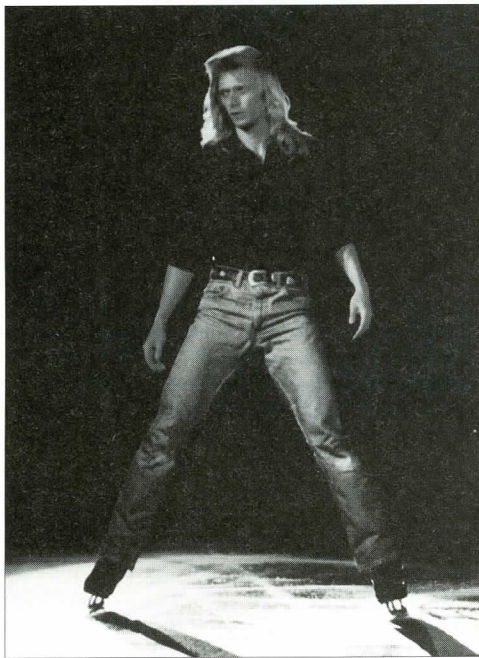
A skater born in Czechoslovakia brings his love of Springsteen to the ice. By Dan Johnson

JUMPIN' JOE. KIND OF SOUNDS LIKE ONE OF CRAZY Janey's buddies from Greasy Lake, or one of Magic Rat's glorified gangsters prowling the streets of Jungleground. In reality, "Jumpin'" Jozef Sabovcik is an Olympic medal-winning figure skater who now skates professionally. The catch is that Sabovcik is a huge Bruce Springsteen fan, and since 1992 he has been skating—executing triple axles and double toe loops—to Springsteen's music. No joke: Sabovcik dons blue jeans, a shirt with rolled-up sleeves, even an old bandana stuck in his back pocket, and skates his choreographed routines to actual Boss cuts. And he's won contests doing it.

He started by mixing "Fire" with ice. "I was doing a tour of the U.S.," Sabovcik explains, "skating mainly in theaters, on small ice stages, and 'Fire' was a show stopper. That's when I decided I was going to do rock and roll."

Of course, introducing rock and roll to a stodgy sport known for rigid etiquette and accustomed to routines choreographed to symphonies and opera scores made for a difficult transition.

"It took a little while for the judges to accept my hair," Sabovcik admits. "Then it took a little while for them to accept my jeans, and then the harder music, but I think if you do it in a good enough way they'll take it."

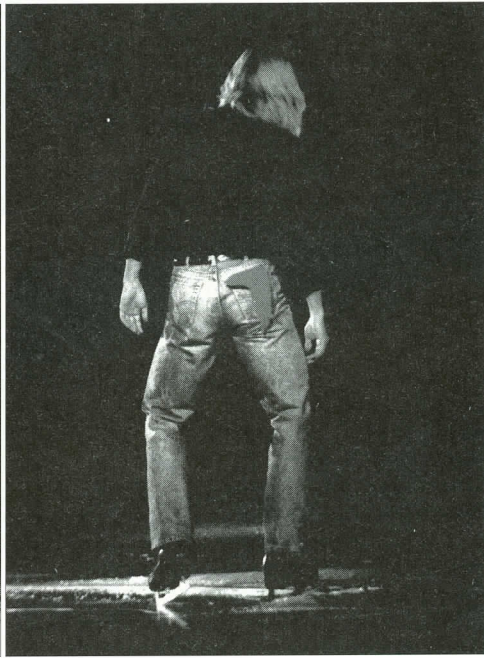


Sabovcik, 33, is no stranger to impressing judges. He was born in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia (now the Slovak republic) and started skating virtually as soon as he could walk. As an amateur he was the Czechoslovakian national champion, and at the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo he took home the bronze medal (mind you, he was not skating to Springsteen at the time). He went on to be the

European champion in 1985 and 1986 and placed fourth at the World Skating Championships in both of those years.

After the 1986 World Championships, Sabovcik elected to have what he thought would be routine knee surgery. Much to his dismay, a second surgery followed the first and the rehabilitation time required kept him off the ice for nearly two years. At that point, Sabovcik decided to retire as an amateur and

become a professional. He got married, moved first to Germany and then to Canada, where his son Blade was born. Unfortunately, soon after Blade's birth, the marriage disintegrated. Jozef moved to Salt Lake City in 1992 and now splits his time between Salt Lake and Sun Valley, Idaho, competing on the pro circuit and performing with touring shows and on TV specials. It was on the pro circuit that he got his nickname.





"The nickname was given to me by [fellow pro skater and commentator] Scott Hamilton, who is a really good friend of mine," says Sabovcik. "Everybody says my jumps are higher now than when I was an amateur, which I suppose could be true. I do a layout backflip [see photo at left] which nobody else does. I have a thing called a tuck axle which, again, nobody does, and I do a quadruple toe loop. There aren't many people who do that."

Daredevil skating makes Sabovcik unique. But so does his taste in music, especially since he grew up behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War.

"I had heard of Springsteen because I'd been to the United States," he recalls. "In 1981 I spent five weeks in Colorado Springs, and that was when 'Hungry Heart' was really big. Later, somebody lent me a copy of *Born in the USA*, and I listened to it every day. In 1985 I had a show in Vienna, Austria, so I went to a record store there and bought everything by Bruce I could find, which ended up being all his albums up to that point."

Sabovcik finally saw Bruce live for the first time in 1988 in Munich, West Germany, on the *Tunnel of Love* Express tour and has been a diehard fan ever since—his record collection boasts 130 Bruce discs. And like so many fans, it's the personal connection he feels with Bruce's songs that has galvanized his love for the artist's work.

"His music parallels my life quite a bit. Like when *Tunnel of Love* came out, the lyrics on that album were kind of about marriage not working out, and my marriage was going down at that point too. And when *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town* came out, they were very positive records, and my son was just born in '92, so I could relate.

"As a matter of fact, when *Blade* was little and kept crying—you know how babies are when they're three months old—I used to sing 'Pony Boy' to him all the time, and he knows that song to this day. It's such a great lullaby."

Sabovcik is further evidence that Springsteen's music transcends cultural and political barriers. "Springsteen sings about people," Jozef says "and, whether they are from the United States or Canada or Czechoslovakia, people go through pretty much the same things."

Sabovcik also performs to rock songs other than Springsteen's. In the past, he's skated to Alice Cooper's "Welcome to My Nightmare," Whitesnake's "Slow and Easy" and Ozzy Osbourne's "Diary of a Madman"; as he says, "I like hard rock." But Springsteen's work speaks to him more directly than do those more raucous bands.

"What I liked about Springsteen's music was not only the music but mainly the lyrics," he asserts. "Coming from a different country and a completely different background, you might think I wouldn't be able to relate to what he was saying. The thing is I could relate to a lot of his songs very well."

Sabovcik has performed to a variety of Springsteen tunes, and not the ones that might be the most obvious choices. He has eschewed Bruce's epic story-songs because they would need to be edited to fit into a four-minute skating program, and Joe is very careful to not disturb the artistry of the music. Sabovcik has also avoided Springsteen's big hits, favoring instead songs that he feels a deep connection with at the time he performs them. For instance, his divorce prompted Sabov-

cik to choose the more obscure Bruce track, "Trapped."

"At the time I was going through the separation from my wife," he remembers, "I literally felt trapped, so it was very appropriate. A friend of mine who teaches skating here in Salt Lake City choreographed it for me, and I did it at the Professional World Team Championships in '95. I scored three 10s for it."

He has also skated to "War" and "Merry Christmas Baby" in addition to "Fire" and "Trapped."

In keeping with his dedication to the integrity of Bruce's music, Joe goes all the way when he's doing a routine to one of Bruce's songs. In addition to coming up with fitting choreography, he also picks out appropriate outfits.

"I did 'Trapped' in blue jeans with a red handkerchief in my back pocket and a black Levi's shirt with the sleeves rolled-up. And for 'Fire' I was basically dressed like he is on the cover of *Born in the USA*. Same for 'Merry Christmas Baby.' For 'War,' if you've seen the video, that's basically what I wear."

And yes, Sabovcik has lived out many fans' fantasy by being able to meet the Boss in person, after the Salt Lake City show on the recent *Ghost of Tom Joad* tour.

"Needless to say, I was really nervous," Sabovcik confides. "I mean, it was worse than going to the Olympics. But he was very cool. I obviously perform as well, so I understand all this backstage stuff, I'm usually on the other end. You may have a bad performance, or you could be tired and not feel like meeting anyone, so I felt awkward. Especially since he did a two-and-a-half-hour solo concert—I can't quite imagine how that would be.


"But he was much more than anything I ever expected. He was very nice. We talked for about 15 minutes. He had never seen me skate, so he asked me to send him a video."

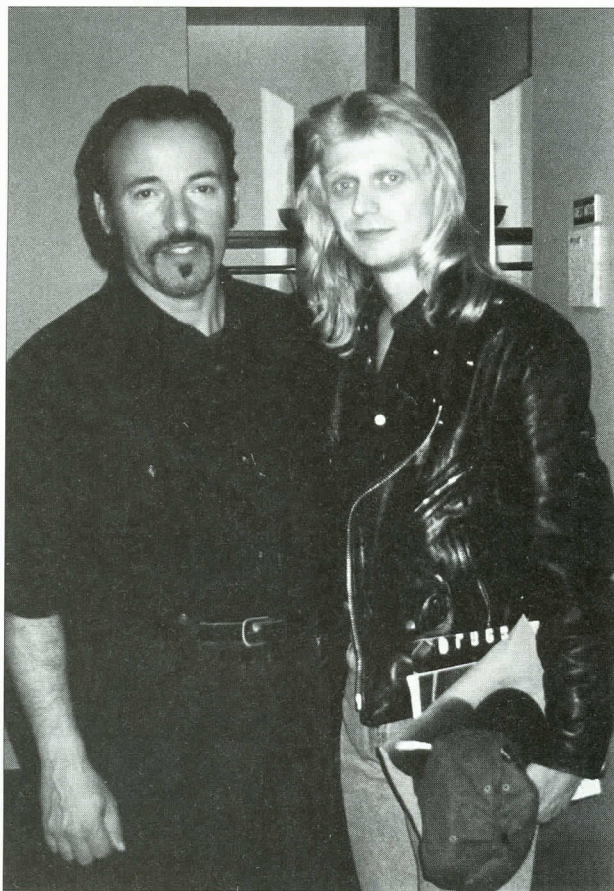
Sabovcik even got a little performance advice from the Boss. "At that time I was planning to do another number and I was wondering if 'War' should be it. I told him and he said

'Go for it, it'll be a great number!' It ended up working really well. I got four 10s and a 9.9."

Sabovcik is skating to "Secret Garden" during the artistic segment of his competitions this year and, as always, he is trying find more Bruce songs to skate along with.

"I would like to skate to 'The Ghost of Tom Joad,' but it's hard," Sabovcik says. "The one I would really like to do is his live version of 'The Promised Land,' the one with that staccato tapping on the guitar. There is one other thing I wish I could skate to, but Bruce has never released it and never performed it live in any good recording atmosphere: 'Janey Needs a Shooter.' I think it's one of the best songs he has ever done. I have one version, but the sound quality is not good. If there was a version where the sound really is clear then I would definitely consider doing it, but I would have to ask his permission."

If you're interested in reading more about this man who pays tribute to one of his adopted country's—and rock and roll's—true icons every time he laces up the skates, check out Joe's as-yet untitled autobiography that is set to be published in September of 1998. Meanwhile, keep your eye out for Sabovcik on the professional skating circuit this winter. He's not too hard to spot—he's the one wearing the blue jeans. 





# Joe Grushecky Coming Home

By T. L. Grimm

Coming home to the Pittsburgh area is always a bittersweet experience for me; the joy that I experience seeing family and friends is tempered by the desolation that I feel. The closed mills and boarded-up businesses are a grim reminder of the economic depression that has existed here for the better part of two decades.

Joe Grushecky typifies the people of this area. He is a hard-bitten, journeyman rocker who is fiercely proud of his work and his heritage. At heart he is, before all else, a family man. Joe has been making music for over twenty years and has been lauded by music critics for delivering a poignant, heartfelt message.

As befits this working-class man in this city

of blue-collar men and women, Joe and I meet in a small diner. He is wearing a Pittsburgh Pirates cap pulled low over his eyes. I jokingly ask him if he is incognito today and, smiling, he replies, "That's one thing that I don't have to worry about." He stands tall and broad with a healthy peppering of gray in his hair and goatee, and he talks with a pronounced Pennsylvania accent that reminds me of friends that I have long since lost touch with.

Joe seems leery about this interview. He's cautious about doing an interview for a publication dedicated to covering Bruce Springsteen. Joe has a unique personal and professional relationship with Springsteen that many other artists might be envious of, and I

get the impression that Joe doesn't want to take advantage of that special friendship. Grushecky tells me quite directly, "I'm honored to work with an artist of Bruce's caliber, but I don't want to ride on his coattails."

Bruce produced and played on Grushecky's 1995 album, *American Babylon*. More significantly, Joe collaborated with Bruce on two of that album's tracks, "Homestead" and "Dark and Bloody Ground." Joe speaks of the working relationship with Bruce as being very easy and comfortable saying simply, "Bruce and I are the same age, and we share similar concerns and backgrounds, both socially and musically."

"The collaboration originally started when I gave Bruce the lyrics to 'Homestead,' and I



guess that it really struck his fancy. We got together and it basically worked out where he did most of the music and I did most of the words.

"As the *American Babylon* project progressed, I was sitting on the lyrics for 'Dark and Bloody Ground,' and I felt that it was the bookend to 'Homestead.' I really wanted to collaborate with Bruce on that because I felt that it was crying out for the same kind of treatment. 'Dark and Bloody Ground' was one of the last songs that we recorded. Bruce and I took about an hour out of the session, sat in a room with a couple of acoustic guitars and banged it out. We presented it to the band and then recorded it on the spot. It was great because the song was written and recorded as you hear it now in the space of a couple of hours. There was a real spark of creation there."

Joe's ninth album, *Coming Home*, has already been released in Europe and is due to be released in the U.S. at the end of January, 1998. The album is planned for release on the Viceroy label, distributed by Warner Brothers. Of special interest to Springsteen fans are four songs that Grushecky has collaborated on with Bruce: "1945," "Cheap Motel," "I'm Not Sleeping" and "Idiot's Delight."

In 1995, after *American Babylon* was in the can, Joe and Bruce got together for a song-writing session. "There was no particular purpose except to write some songs. I came in with some ideas, and we worked them out. We had written the songs, and they were just sitting there waiting for someone to use them. As I got more into this new project I went back through the things that we had written and picked out the ones that fit what I was doing at that particular time and that would complement the new project that I was working on. We had actually written a few more together."

"When I started working on my current project, the only one that I was sure that I wanted to use was '1945.' I had become interested in V.E. Day and realized that I didn't really know anything about my mother and father, about how they had met and their courtship. I wanted to get their story down. I actually called my mom and dad and interviewed them. A couple of weeks later this song popped into my head, and it was basically their story. I was stuck on the chorus, and Bruce wrote it."

"I recorded 'I'm Not Sleeping' by myself for the *X-Files* record," explains Joe. It ended up not being used on that compilation, so he included it on *Coming Home*. Lyrically, it shares the isolation of Springsteen's own "Jackson Cage." The main character laments, "The world outside is such a dangerous place, that I don't dare, I don't dare show my face."

On "Cheap Motel" Joe says, "I was reading an article somewhere about drifters who just travel from town to town, living in motels, and two drifters were picked up and shaken down by the police for the Oklahoma City



## Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers Discography

The Iron City Houserockers *Love's So Tough* (1979) MCA

The Iron City Houserockers *Have a Good Time but ... Get Out Alive!* (1980) MCA

The Iron City Houserockers *Blood On the Bricks* (1981) MCA

The Iron City Houserockers *Cracking Under Pressure* (1983) MCA

Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers *Rock and Real* (1989) Rounder

Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers *Swimming with the Sharks* (1991) Rounder

Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers *End of the Century* (1992) Razor & Tie

The Iron City Houserockers *Pumping Iron & Sweating Steel: The Best of* (1992) Rhino

Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers *American Babylon* (1995) Razor & Tie

Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers *Coming Home* (1998) Viceroy

Check out the official Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers' home page at <http://www.nb.net/~sschake/update.html> for tour schedule, album ordering information, and occasional online chat sessions with Grushecky and other artists.

bombing. They were suspects for a day or so until the police found out that they were just drifters. With the song, I wanted to capture that drifting feeling.

"'Idiot's Delight' is actually the title of a radio show in New York hosted by Vin Scelso, which is coincidental. I had had that title in verse and chorus sitting around for years. Bruce and I were knocking ideas back and forth, and I played this almost ballad version of the song that didn't have anything to do musically with the one that you hear on the record. Bruce said, 'Let's try rocking it.' He added a skanky guitar riff and started singing it, and I said, 'Yeah, it works this way.' It's a humorous song about a guy waiting to get into heaven, and when he gets there, Saint Peter's railing against all the idiots down on earth and wondering why they're screwing things up so bad."

Of his collaborator, Joe says, "Bruce is just

incredibly gifted musically. He can play the same song twenty different ways and you'll say, 'Geez, this is good, this is good, this is good; ah, this is better.' Musically, he's just a genius. He just racks them off."

Grushecky has always been extremely gifted lyrically. His songs are peopled with believable characters that he cobbles together from the local bars, mills and the streets. "I like to write songs rooted in reality," Joe says. "It's more honest that way. Our music is honest if nothing else; it has a very low bullshit quotient."

John and Desiree, Joe's children, sing background vocals on "I'm Not Sleeping" and another track, a love song to the children titled "Innocence is Beautiful." Joe explains, "I wanted them to see what their father did. When I make records I always think, 'Well, this is it. They're not going to let me make



# STOP PRESS

On December 13, 1997, Bruce Springsteen performed with Joe Grushecky at Cheers in Long Branch, NJ. After watching most of the show, which included openers Joe D'Urso & Stone Caravan, Bruce was asked to come up and play. Grabbing an acoustic guitar and a chair, Bruce joined Grushecky for two acoustic songs to close out the set. The small crowd at this intimate show were treated to "Homestead," which was co-written by Springsteen, and "Never Be Enough Time," both from 1995's *American Babylon*.

any more after this.' I look at it as though it's going to be my last one. So, I thought it would be a nice thing to have them on one."

I mention to Joe that *Coming Home* reminds me of his 1989 "solo" debut, *Rock and Real*. Joe replies, "Well, *Rock and Real* was a personal album, and this is my most personal album since that one. On *American Babylon* we wrote about a lot of big themes, about a lot of cinematic themes. You can almost hear the horses galloping across the screen on some of it. *Coming Home* is more about keeping the home fires burning."

"My wife, LeeAnn, says that this album is like a trip through my record collection. Growing up in Pittsburgh, I listened to tons of soul music. 'Soul Survivor' is our version of the soul song. 'In Our Little Room' is our Drifters song."

Regarding "Touch the Rain," Joe says, "I had known some people who had suffered some personal losses. Basically what I was trying to say was that I want to live each day and be thankful for each and every day and be thankful for what I have. It's sort of a statement on how life is so short. I knew a lot of people who had passed away; they were just here today and gone tomorrow. I was just reflecting that I should appreciate life a little bit more."

Joe recently had an official online chat session over the Internet. "It was pretty cool," he says now. "It's fascinating; it really is a worldwide thing. For people all over the world to be able to communicate back and forth with each other over a television screen is amazing to me. I'd like to be able to use the technology in some fashion. I think that if more people knew about us, if more people would give the music a chance and listen to it, they would appreciate it. We'd like to get a bigger fan base so that it would be a little easier to survive economically. I think that the music is as good roots rock as anything that's out there. I think that, as a band, we can compete with just about anybody. And I think that we make some pretty good records."

"You would think that the people who like Bruce's music

would normally gravitate to us. But there are some of them that just hate us. My take on it is that people don't really know about us, and they don't know who we are or where we're coming from. I think that they think that we're ripping Bruce off. If you listen to some of the music [on Springsteen's earlier albums] and some of the stuff that the Iron City Houserockers were doing, it just happened simultaneously. We listened to what he was doing and he listened to what we were doing. I always get amazed and think, 'Geez, here's Bruce Springsteen coming out and working with us. Why don't [Springsteen fans] get this?' But Bruce casts a big shadow."

At the time of the last album's release, Springsteen said, "With *American Babylon* I want to help Joe get to the break-even point. To have an audience that he sustains and that sustains him." I ask Joe if he thinks that that was accomplished. Laughing, he says, "Well, I'm still working a day gig. I'm teaching in a special school, working with kids who have learning disabilities."

I ask Joe if Bruce might join the Houserockers for some shows on their next tour. He replies, "I don't know. He's always welcome, and we keep an extra amplifier in the truck in case he shows up. We had a blast doing it [dur-

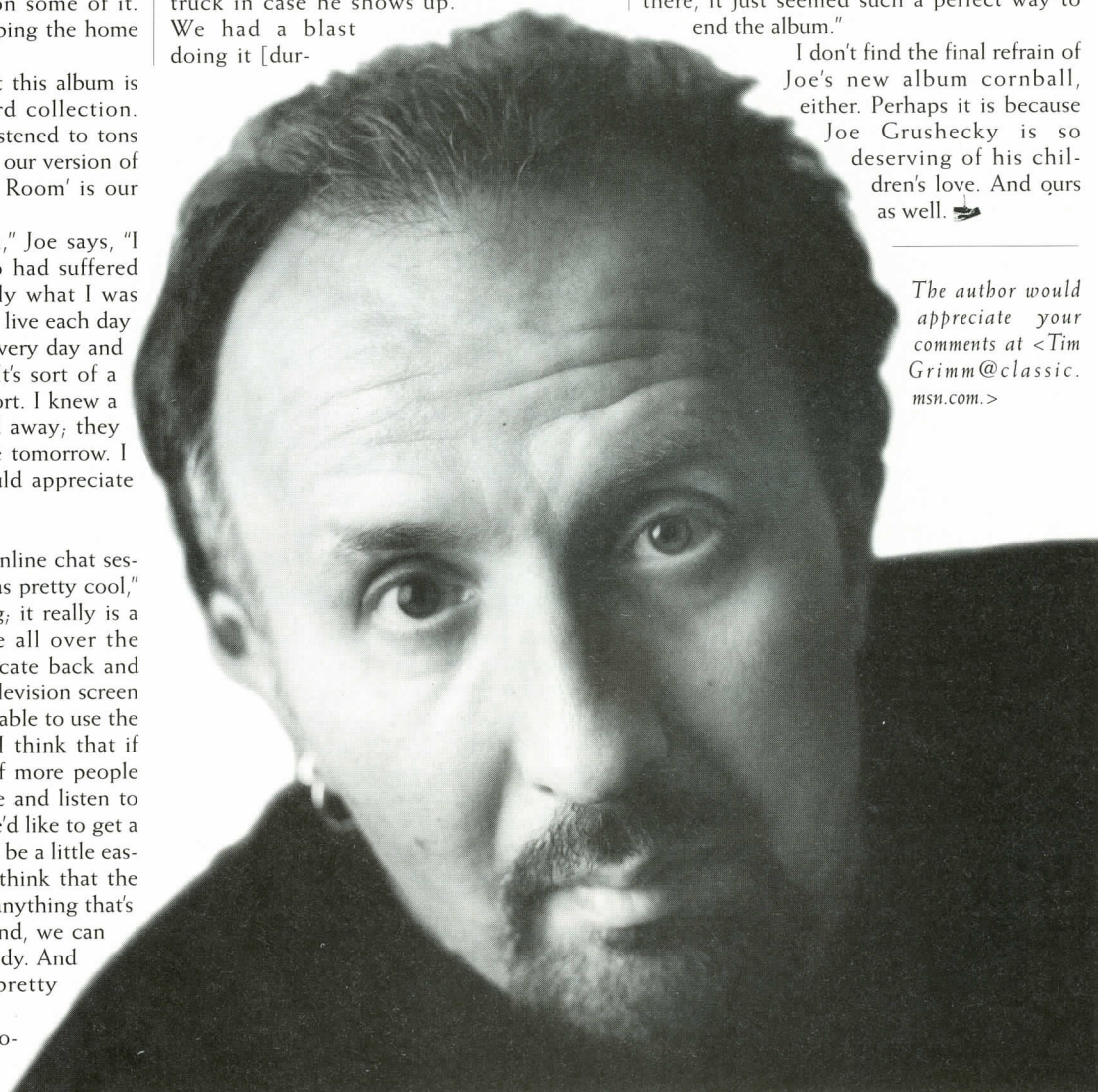
ing 1995's 'October Assault']. I know that it had to be as exciting for the audience as it was for us; it was just electrifying. Having our band with Bruce on lead guitar in a small club like that just shook the rafters."

Grushecky and the band recently selected a favorite from the October Assault, "Light of Day," to contribute to the *One Step Up, Two Steps Back* tribute. "We were sort of a last-minute addition to that. We had been told what the other artist's selections had been, and there seemed to be a real preponderance of slow things on it. To me, Bruce is one of the greatest rockers that ever lived. I didn't think anything on the record was showing that side of him. I knew that we could smoke 'Light of Day' because we were smoking it live on the *American Babylon* tour. It was sort of a 'no-brainer.'"

Grushecky's latest album, *Coming Home*, closes with "Innocence is Beautiful," and with his children singing the sweet refrain, "We love you, Daddy." It was his wife LeeAnn's idea. Joe admits, "If anyone else were to do that, I would say, 'This is cornball,' you know, 'this is so cornball.' It probably is in a lot of ways. But once they did it and it was on there, it just seemed such a perfect way to end the album."

I don't find the final refrain of Joe's new album cornball, either. Perhaps it is because Joe Grushecky is so deserving of his children's love. And ours as well. ➤

The author would appreciate your comments at <Tim.Grimm@classic.msn.com.>



RICHARD KELLY PHOTO



# About Backstreets Magazine

*Backstreets* is a quarterly magazine that covers the music of Bruce Springsteen and other Jersey Shore performers. The magazine began in 1980 and over the years has covered Bruce Springsteen's recordings and performances more extensively than any other publication in the world.

*Backstreets* appears generally every three or four months, though the actual publication date is affected by breaking news, tour coverage and the occasional special issue. Each issue of the magazine is progressively numbered. Subscribers can tell the expiration date of their current subscription by looking at the number that appears above their name on their mailing label. If that number (it follows an "X") is the same number as the latest issue, your subscription has expired. Unlike most larger, consumer magazines, *Backstreets* does not have the resources to continually bombard subscribers with renewal mailings, so subscribers need to take note of their expiration date. Since *Backstreets* carries very little paid advertising, subscription revenue is the only real support the magazine has—so by subscribing or renewing you are helping us with this admittedly modest effort.

*Backstreets* is available on a limited number of select newsstands around the world, though newsstand availability is not something you can count on in most areas. If you're interested in the magazine, we highly recommend that you consider subscribing since subscribers are offered numerous benefits (see Hotline section below) in addition to the convenience of getting the magazine as soon as it comes off the press and at a discount from the cover price.

Stores interested in carrying *Backstreets* can contact our office: though the magazine's audience is select, the sell through percentage is extremely high and the magazine is offered to distributors on a guaranteed full-return basis. *Backstreets* is also handled by a number of independent distributors including Ingram, IPD, and Caroline.

Current subscription rates for *Backstreets* are \$18 a year in the US and Canada (all prices are in US dollars); \$30 for two years; and \$40 for three years (a savings of \$14). Rates for overseas subscriptions are \$25 per year (again in US funds), or \$42 for a two-year subscription. You can subscribe or renew your current subscription by writing to Subscriber Services, *Backstreets*, PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115. If you have a credit card, you can FAX your order to us at (206) 728-8827. If you'd like to charge a subscription and don't have a FAX, you can call our office at

(206) 728-7603. Our e-mail address for orders and subscriptions is bossorders@aol.com. Our office is open Monday thru Friday, from 9:30 a.m. until 5 p.m., Pacific Time. Our phones are for orders and subscriptions only: obviously we can't be working if we're answering questions about album releases or ticket sales. Please call our Hotline to be updated on all the latest news.

## The Backstreets Hotline

To keep our subscribers updated with current information between issues, *Backstreets* provides a 24 hours-a-day phone message called the Backstreets Boss Hotline. The Hotline is updated at least every week (usually on Monday evening) and contains all the latest available information on album releases, tour dates, and appearances. There is no charge at present for the Hotline, though callers will pay the normal long distance charges to access the line. The line gets thousands of calls each week so calling at off hours is the best way to access it.

The phone number to the Backstreets Hotline is unlisted and unpublished since, due to the high volume of calls, the service can only be provided to current subscribers of the magazine. To assure that the service is only made available to subscribers, the number to the Hotline is printed on the mailing sheet that goes to subscribers with each issue. We do change the number frequently to ensure that the service is only accessible by those who are current subscribers (the number occasionally gets passed around by fans and even has been announced on the radio which causes the lines to be overloaded with non-subscribers who don't help support the service). If you're unsure of the present number for the Hotline and you are a current subscriber you can write us with a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE), and we will send it to you.

## SuperSubs

Partially because of the demands of the Hotline, *Backstreets* also has a SuperSub program for those hardcore fan who also serve as the supporting members of our magazine. SuperSubs get an entire package of subscriber services in addition to their normal subscription and access to a special SuperSub-only Hotline number. SuperSub benefits include getting the magazine sent first class, a first class subscription to all Backstreet Records catalogs and hot sheets, a special edition SuperSub t-shirt, and a free classified ad in each issue of the magazine. SuperSubs are now available for overseas fans, including airmail service. For more information

on the SuperSub, please call the Backstreets Orderline at (206) 728-7603.

## Love letters, hate mail, etc.

*Backstreets* is very much a forum for the ideas and input of the many subscribers who contribute to the effort each issue. Letters to the editor are always welcome. We read them all and publish as many as space permits. Clips and xeroxes of news items sent in by readers are essential in helping us keep the magazine and hotline informative. Due to the number of inquiries we receive, we cannot always answer every letter, but we do respond to all who send a self-addressed stamped envelope with their inquiry.

## Backissues and past glories

*Backstreets* is the longest running Springsteen fanzine, and the total number of pages we've published over the years represents the single largest chunk of Bruce Springsteen information ever compiled under one roof. Though many of the earliest issues are sold out and command high prices on the collector's market, a number of backissues are still available at reasonable prices until supplies are depleted. You'll find an order form in this issue of the issues still available or you can always call our office.

In late 1989 a collection of some of the best articles from the magazine was published in the hardback book *Backstreets, Springsteen: The Man and His Music* from Harmony Books. This 224-page book collects some of the best from past issues of *Backstreets* and adds an extensive discography and a complete listing of all concerts Bruce Springsteen has ever performed. The book contains over 150 photographs of Springsteen, many in full color, and most never published before. *Record Collector* magazine described the book as "Wonderful, the best possible buy for the Springsteen convert," while the *Asbury Park Press* called the selection of photos "brilliant." A completely revised and updated second edition paperback was released in 1992. The books are available in finer bookstores or by calling the Backstreets Orderline at (206) 728-7603.

## Backstreet Records Catalog

*Backstreets* also has a separate division called Backstreet Records that publishes a mail-order catalog of official and authorized Bruce Springsteen merchandise. Backstreet Records carries numerous books and fanzines about Bruce Springsteen and other related artists. Yearly subscriptions to the catalog (five issues) are \$5 in the U.S. and Canada, \$8 overseas.



# Local Boys, Trailer Parks, and the Godfather of Soul

OVER HIS 30-YEAR MUSICAL CAREER, Bruce Springsteen has done hundreds of interviews with journalists. The last few years he seems to have actually begun to enjoy them, and, fueled by this new-found enthusiasm, he's started to sit for them more often. But those who worked the press department at Columbia Records in the early days say that to get Springsteen to do an interview back then was like convincing him to go to the dentist: he knew it was good for him, but he sure wasn't excited about doing it. The famous dual covers of *Time* and *Newsweek* almost didn't happen, simply because Springsteen didn't want to sit down with yet another reporter.

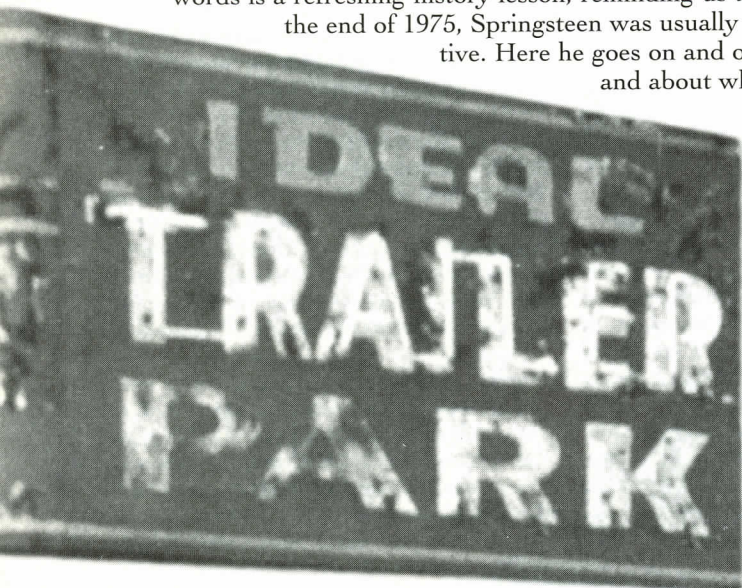
Though there are several well-known interviews from 1975, this era is perhaps the most under-represented of all when it comes to Bruce interviews, and some would argue it is the most important period in Bruce's long career. *Backstreets* recently stumbled upon several "lost" interviews from this period, and here you'll find the first of a series. This particular interview was conducted by a European journalist—who unfortunately is unknown, since the recording doesn't name the interviewer—sometime in the early fall of 1975. It was recorded by Columbia, and recently unearthed from a record company vault. The interviewer is from Sweden, and chances are, considering that the interview was professionally recorded, the interview was probably done for Swedish radio. The interview itself was obviously conducted in the United States, most likely on the East Coast in August or September. With the release of *Born to Run*, Columbia flew in a few European journalists to try to stir up interest in advance of Springsteen's first overseas tour later that fall, and we'd guess this interview is from that period.

What's most fascinating about this particular conversation is that, when faced with a European journalist, Springsteen ends up explaining his background in far greater detail than he would have with an American interviewer. There is an innocence to his approach to the business of making music, and, at times, a certain naiveté. Through it all runs the bravado of a headstrong young man who very much knows where he wants his career to go. Hearing his story in his own words is a refreshing history lesson, reminding us that the swagger of the Boss was something that Bruce grew into. By

the end of 1975, Springsteen was usually not this friendly or frank with journalists, and rarely was he as talkative. Here he goes on and on about his early roots, about Elvis, about putting together the band,

and about what attributes a band leader needs. He also tells a story about his very first gig ever—which he says was in a trailer park—that has not been related before or since.

What follows is a complete transcript of the 1975 "lost" interview.



Photographs by Phil Ceccola

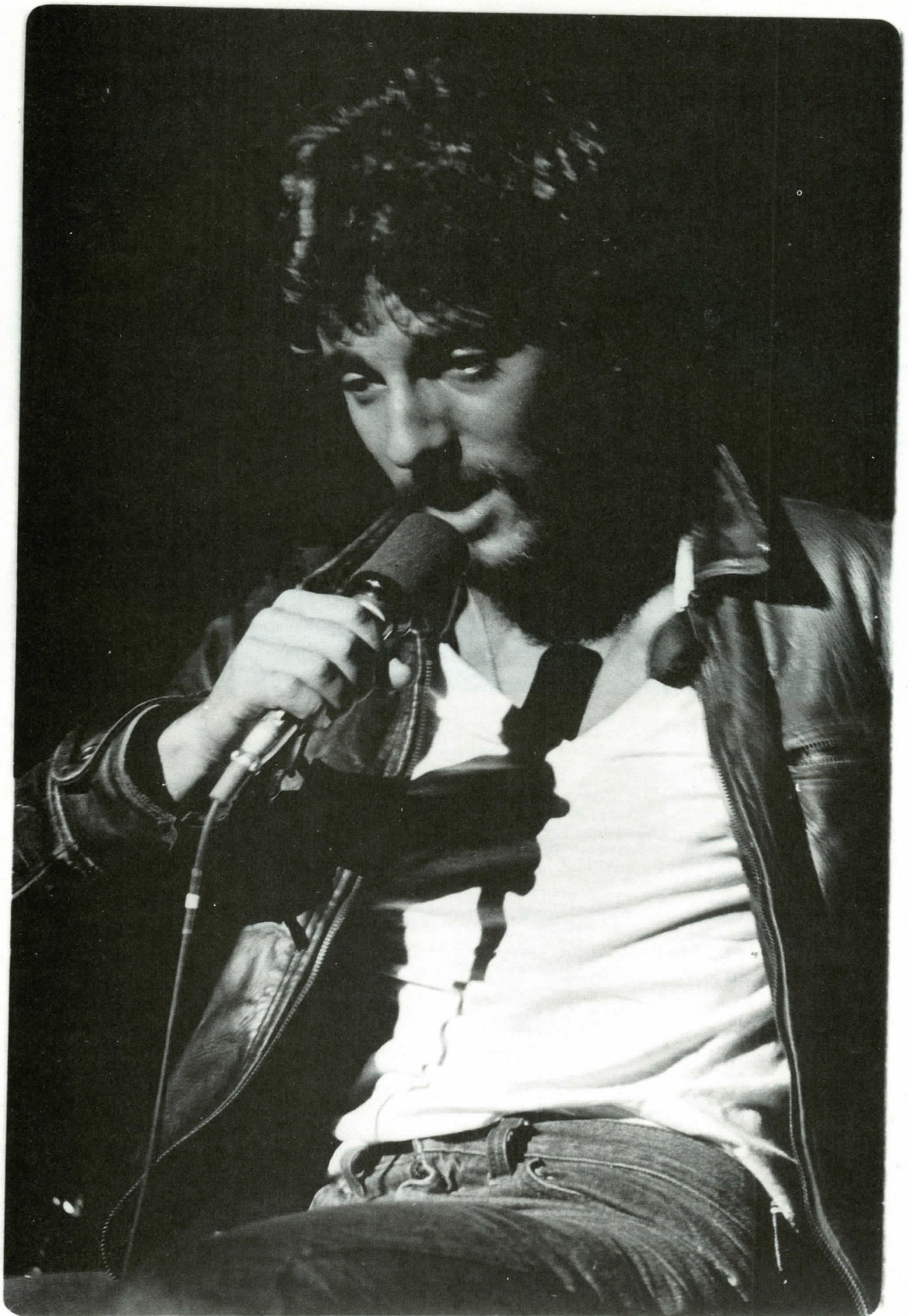
**INTERVIEWER:** *Tell us a little bit about Asbury Park, and E Street, because that's one thing we don't know anything about.*

**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN:** I guess you must have coastal canals? Boardwalks, fast wheels driving around? That's what it is. It's not a big town; it's a small, sort of has-been resort town, where mostly older people go, and people that ain't got enough money to burn gas and go farther south to a bigger resort town, they stop there. It's okay. It's nice. I liked it. I lived there for quite a while. E Street, that's just a street. It could be anywhere.

*That's the place where you grew up?*

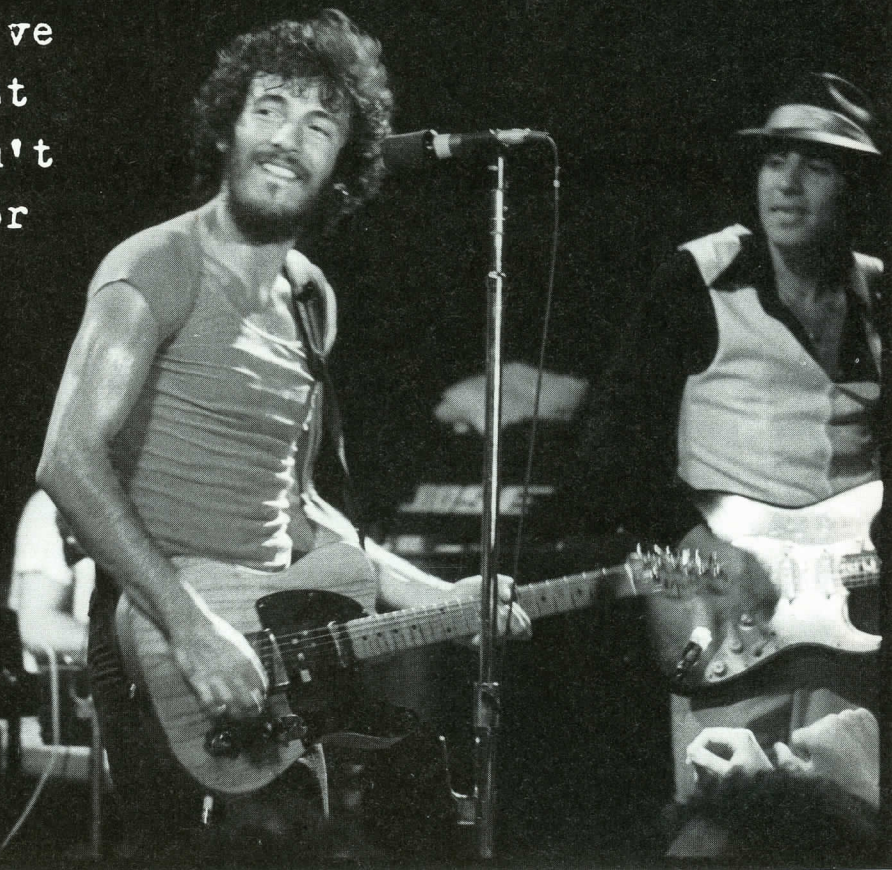
Actually E Street is where my piano player—who played with me on the first two albums, named Davey Sancious—







When you got your local boys with you, you've got a thing you just can't buy. I wouldn't trade these guys for nobody.



that's where he's from, the street he lived on [in Belmar, New Jersey]. We just took the name of the street for the name of the band.

*What sort of things did you do? You went to school, and what sort of life did you live when you grew up in Asbury Park?*

I went to school for a little while, and my parents moved to California, and I just lived on my own pretty much, playing in the band in bars and the clubs, and mostly hanging out. That was about it, the same thing everybody else was doing at the time. Except I played all the time since I was 13, been playing for I guess about 11 or 12 years. I've been supporting myself at it since I was about 16 or 15. So that's what I did.

*And that's what everybody else did in that area too?*

No, most people weren't playing in bands. There was some music around at the time, but I don't know what everybody else was doing. I kept to myself pretty much. I didn't get involved. I wanted to play the guitar, wanted to have a good band, and I devoted most of my energy to that. I had a few friends.

*Why a band and not a solo artist? Because you write all the material.*

Well, in a way, see, it's both. I'm signed to Columbia as a solo artist. There is no E Street Band signed to Columbia. But I've always had a band, always played in a band. What happened is I got to a point where I couldn't afford a band any more, and I split up the band I had. I wrote a mess of songs by

myself on acoustic guitar, and I went up and I auditioned for CBS, so everybody thought I was sort of an acoustic folk singer. I put my band back together when I got a record deal. So I'm a solo artist, but it's a band too. We're a band onstage—there's no hired backup musicians in the formal sense.

*What sort of music did you listen to when you grew up and started to play in small bands?*

At the time I listened to whatever was on AM radio. There was no FM, of course. Is there FM in Sweden? There is? Well, at that time there was no FM radio, but the radio had some good music on it in the early '60s, when I started playing. And I was conscious of music from the late '50s, even when I was nine or ten years old. I got into Elvis Presley when I was nine. Went out and got a guitar and tried to do the whole thing. So I was conscious of music from then, but it was always there, on the radio. We never had a record player in the house, never had records or anything like that, not until I was 13 or 14. But I remember my mother always listened to the radio—she always listened to the AM stations. Elvis was big then, in the early '60s, and the Ronettes, all the Spector stuff, and the girl groups from New York, which is what for me is a big part of my background. The Ronettes, the Shirelles, the Crystals, the Chiffons, who put out a lot of great records and a lot of great music at the time. And then the big English thing happened, the Beatles and all that stuff, and the Stones, Manfred Mann. There was a lot of great music on the radio, and that's pretty much what I got into.

We do some Manfred Mann things in the show, covers.



Actually, that they covered from other people, but that's where those bands got their things from. Manfred Mann is a classic example: we do "Sha La La," which was a big hit for them, and it was originally a Shirelles song. So it was funny. What happened was, I was into the Shirelles, who were from New York, and then Manfred Mann, which was an English band—I guess, wherever they were from—came back with the same thing, just slightly different. And "It's Gonna Work Out Fine," which was an Ike and Tina Turner song. I got those kinds of things. There was a lot of great music in the early '60s. AM radio was fine right up until about 1967, when FM came in and started to play long cuts, without any commercials, and you could see the disappearance of the really good three-minute single. Now the groups were all leaning toward that psychedelic-type stuff that was happening for a while. So the music that got me was what was on AM from 1959 to 1965. And then later on I got into the early '50s.

I started playing guitar when I was about 14, 13. And they had that big San Francisco thing which went down over here; I never got too involved in that. My roots were sort of formed by then: Roy Orbison, the great English singles bands, the girl groups from New York. Chuck Berry, of course—your classics.

*You were quite young when you started. Where did you play?*

Everywhere. High school dances, bars, weddings. I did weddings—I can remember staying up all night learning "Moon River" because the bride requested it. "Moon River!" (laughs) We didn't play any of that stuff at the time, but we needed the bucks, right? So this cat Tex [Vinyard], who was our manager, this crazy guy, says, "We got you this wedding tomorrow, all you gotta do is, you can play whatever you want, but you have to play 'Moon River.'" So I went out that night, got the sheet music—could not read a note, couldn't read any music, but I got the sheet music and I also got a book that showed you how to read sheet music—and I managed to pick it out. The band learned it, and the next day we played the damn thing.

First thing I ever did was in a trailer camp, out in the country. It was in the fall, with trailer camp people. Ain't got no trailer camps in Sweden? Motor homes, like you pull them with your car. You know America, everybody's moving all over all the damn time. They had these trailer camps all over, you pull 'em and you park 'em. And the first gig I did was in one of these. And there's a certain trailer camp type of person, right? We played there, and it was us and this other country music band who had an accordion, a bass guitar, a guitar player, and

a little girl who stood on a stool and sang into one of these big RCA/Victor microphones, like in them old Shirley Temple movies. She came out there, and she sang, and they did all these country songs. And we came out and we did "Twist and Shout" and Ray Charles songs and Chuck Berry songs. And the people went nuts. They were older people too—there were only a few kids there—it was all older, country-type people, and man, we played for like eight hours that day. I remember starting at noon, and we played until like 8 or 9 pm, when we had to stop. That was one of the first gigs I ever did.

So I was doing everything. I played for the Fireman's Ball, where they didn't know what kind of band they were hiring, and we'd get there and just blow everybody's mind. The Fireman's Ball, played for the Boy Scouts once, did every kind of gig. High school dances, clubs, anything, we did it. Played in the mental institutions for the patients, everything.

*Where did you get your musicians? Was it all people that you knew growing up?*

This guy Miami Steve is a guy that I knew since I was about 15. Steve had his own band, I had my own band. I just got him in the band a few months ago, but he'd been in all my bands except for this one. So it was good to get him back in. So it was him, I've known him a long time; Garry, I've known Garry for about five years now I guess, and he's been in other bands with me; Danny I've known for six or seven years. They're all people I've known. Clarence I met about three or four years ago. Most of them are local boys, except for Max and Roy. Roy's from Long Island, and Max is from North Jersey—which is not considered local (laughs). Local is your town, maybe ten miles out. North Jersey is a whole other scene from where I live; it's industrial, more like New York.

*With that very strong local feeling, you must be interested in the same things and have the same sort of associations and jokes and everything like that.*

Well no, not really, everybody's sort of different. Everybody's been through different things—different ages, different experiences—but there's a real strong vibe, because everybody realizes we've got a really good thing going here. And they're all good guys, very easy-going, nice guys, and it's a very smooth-running thing right now. So yeah, to a degree, everybody knows New Jersey—it's local. When you got your local boys with you, you've got a thing you just can't buy. I wouldn't trade these guys for nobody. First of all because they all are



great musicians, and there's that extra thing. Like me and Steve do that rap in "E Street Shuffle," and that's what it was like. We sat at that table in that club at three in the morning, and we dreamed and dreamed the day would come when we could make some records. We were both totally into it. That was it, that was number one. I've known Steve since he was about 15, and since then it's been the same thing. That's all we ever talked about. All we ever wanted to do was make a record, and we'd say, "What's the matter with us? We're as good as those guys, we're as good as those guys, how come we ain't got a record deal, what's going on?"

And it's funny, because the other day we were riding somewhere, like coming down here, and we were on the air playing. And everybody was so excited, there we were playing on the air. We used to trudge around in this old van, me and Steve riding up and down the East Coast here—riding to Virginia and Atlanta, all these different towns, just scrubbing away—and that damn van was breaking down all the time... and now here we were on the air playing. And I said, "Steve." And he said "Yeah!" and I said, "This is it: remember all those towns, we'd be riding in the van saying, 'when this happens, when this happens'"—and I never stopped to think that it was happening. And him either. It's something that I'd never take for granted, not for a second. Like last night with that crowd in that hall, I'd never take that for granted. For every night like last night, there were a hundred other nights that we played in these little bars in Jersey, and there was nobody there. And it was long enough playing there to never forget. But it's all right now, I guess.

*What did your family and schoolteachers think about you in the early years, playing guitar in bars?*

Oh they hated it. My mother—you know, your mother's your mother. And she tries to be cool with you and let you do your thing. My father, he hated it, couldn't stand it, wanted me to stop. Always was down on it. Wanted me to be a lawyer, some kind of heavy thing—a doctor. Guaranteed income. But I was a stubborn and strong kid, did what I wanted to do and just figured I could do it. Eventually they moved away, and before they knew it, it was happening. And that's the way it always is growing up.

*Did you start very early writing your own songs and lyrics?*

The first time I picked up a guitar, the first night, I started to write a few things because I didn't know how to play anything that was already written. Didn't know how to tune, how to do nothing, so I was making up stuff. I always wrote a little bit, always.

*How has your music changed between these three albums? You've mentioned that you played mostly acoustic music in the beginning, just you on the guitar.*

Not in the beginning; it was about eight months that I did that. I played at Max's Kansas City in New York, a place called Gaslight, which was in the Village, Cafe A Go Go, which was in the Village, Cafe Wha?, little places. I did that for a while when I didn't have a band. I was on the verge of having a record deal, and I was scrubbing away to make some kind of living.

*And as for the changes between the albums, how would you describe your music and how it's changed from the first one to this one?*

The first one was sort of an acoustic-type album, because I was getting pushed in that direction at the time. I was just new in from off the street, and I wasn't in the position where I was going to say, "No, I want to do it like this." I was just saying, "Let me do it." On the second album, I got more control and I had my band together for a year. My producers knew me better and knew what I was capable of doing, which they didn't on the first album—they thought all I could do was strum acoustic guitar and sing folk songs. Finally they found out more about it, and that second one was more of a balance. Some acoustic, and some rock stuff: "Rosalita," "Kitty's Back." And then on this album [*Born to Run*] I really went towards my band. It's not acoustic at all—there's no acoustic guitar, I don't think. A little more in the band direction. I started to come a little more into my own thing: who is me.

Influences were a little more prominent on the other albums; on this one I really started to develop a musical personality of my own, I think. I got to produce. Produced myself with this guy Jon Landau and Mike [Appel], and I used a lot of those early '60s influences, Phil Spector, in the production. So that's the change that's gone on, best way to tell it is by playing them back-to-back.

*I got the feeling you're getting more and more like heavy rock. More and more sounds, more instruments, heavier. High speed all the time.*

It would seem that way. That's not really the case. On record that's the way it seems, because that happens to be the progression on the records. It is definitely more rock on the album this time, I guess what would be considered mainstream rock 'n' roll. I guess that's just the way it worked out on this particular album, that's what I was writing at the time. I wrote some shorter things, but then there's some long things like "Jungleland." It has escalated like that, but that's not really the pattern that I'm following in live performances or in my own musical development.

*You talk about influences; how influenced are you, as you see it yourself, by rhythm and blues and Latin American songs?*

I would say that I'm the kind of guy that whatever goes in



my ear, I digest. But I'm not a big looker; I don't go around looking for it, I'm not a big record collector, I'm not real familiar with the old R & B artists. But whatever I hear, I digest very quickly, and it comes right back out the way I want it to. All the Stax stuff and Atlantic stuff, I'm very into that. Wilson Pickett, Sam Cooke, Sam and Dave, Eddie Floyd, the MGs, Steve Cropper. Yeah, the band has moments when it's based a lot on those rhythm and blues bands, especially in the way I use the band. I use the band in a very similar way: if you see Otis Redding in "Monterey Pop," the way he uses his band; the way James Brown uses his band. Because most of your better band leaders have all been your soul band leaders. Because the white guys always tend to be a little too sloppy, too lazy; they think it's part of the act to be not together or something, I don't know. The best band leaders of the last ten, 20 years, from what I've listened to, have been your soul band leaders. They whip them bands into shape. I tend to use my band that way. I'm doing different things, but in that tradition.

#### *What about Latin American songs?*

I'm not too familiar with it. People always tell me they hear Latin music in my music, and I can believe it because I like it and I'm interested in it. I've heard some, but not a whole lot.



To me, that's like Santana and stuff. What I do is just very lightly, just like "Rosalita." You need a good leader, and that's the one thing that's missing. They're good bands, but they

don't know what they're doing. Not led enough. Everybody needs a certain direction. Ain't nobody does it better than them soul artists. Like Sam and Dave, James Brown. James Brown is an idol, man. He has got his *band*, man. He spits and those guys do somersaults. It's incredible.

*One thing that really makes your music very different from almost everything that's going on in the U.S. now, I think, is that you've got good lyrics. And I suppose everyone says that to you. When you listen to it as a foreigner, like me, you get a sort of a social situation, a world that I have not lived in but get a picture of how it is to live outside the big cities as sort of an American Experience. How much reality is in your lyrics, and do you look on them as also political lyrics,*

*describing a political situation and asking for—or demanding—changes?*

Me? No, no, I'm not a very consciously political person. What has happened in a lot of areas in America right now in the '70s—in the '60s there was this great political consciousness, but it was sort of a superficial political consciousness, I







think. There was everybody going "Yeah!" but there were only a few of them who knew what they were going "Yeah!" about. Some good things did go down, there was this real thing of "us" versus "them." What's happened in the '70s is that people are starting to worry about themselves; it's *me* versus them. Not "we," "me" now. Looking out for number one. People have gotten very cynical, and have lost that sense of unity and community—which may have been superficial in the '60s, but it was there. People have gotten a little too jaded and cynical to go for that too much, and they don't trust anybody and they don't believe anything they hear. That's the climate of the country right now. Everybody's hustling.

Lyric-wise, I don't know. I write about what I know about. I write what things are to me. I don't make any conscious attempt to write something the audience can relate to one way or the other. People say, "hey, that's my childhood," or "hey, that's me." Well, that's good if it is. But I'm not too involved like that.

*You don't write what you could call ordinary love songs; it's more about life, and you could read the lyrics without listening to the music and you'd get some sort of picture about life.*

That's what some people say. I write the songs, I write them to stand up as song lyrics. You're supposed to listen to the song and hear the lyrics—you're not supposed to read the lyrics, because they're *song* lyrics. They go to a song, you know? That's the idea. I'm a songwriter, I'm not a poetry man. That's what I concern myself with. They describe whatever I write into them. Just what I know about, what I grew up with.

*Are you afraid for people to analyze your lyrics too intellectually, to put things in there you didn't mean to be there in the beginning?*

People do what they want to do. That's the way it is. People are going to do that to a degree. Take it any way you want it.

*For the moment you are really making it quite big; the record is selling quite well, and you're on a big tour. Do you get the feeling that the record company and all these guys around you try to push you too hard into a commercial situation? Are you afraid of being commercialized by all this big business all around you?*

I'm a kind of guy that, from the beginning, did what I wanted to do and did it the way I wanted to do it. I've got one concern: to make sure that it's the best band and that it's presented right, so I can do what I feel I have to do. I don't worry about the record company pushing me down any particular path, because it's never been that way from the beginning. I don't go that way. That's not the way I am. I'm not easily pushed into anything. One of the main reasons it's taken so long is because I did it the way I wanted to. Yeah, we're going on this tour, I know what I'm doing.

The only way that happens is if you're scared, you're insecure, you don't know what's happening with yourself. There are only two ways that can happen: you don't know what you

want to do and you're weak enough where they can push you; or you do know what you want to do, and that's what you want to do! I know what I want to do, I've been doing it for twelve years. I didn't walk into this with my eyes closed, and I watch out every minute of the day. As soon as I hear something false ringing, I stop it right away. If something ain't right, I put the skids to it right away. I'm very vigilant. [To someone else in the room:] Am I vigilant, or am I vigilant?

*There is a single, which is being played on the radio in the US, which is not in Sweden yet, which is called "The Fever," a record which has not been released, really, it's not going to be a record. Do you feel the pressure that people are trying to push you to do things you don't want, as in this case? How easy is it for an*

*artist to say, no, this is not good enough, even if you know that there is a market for it.*

It's real easy. You say, "Forget it." That was easy, wasn't it?

*When all this publicity is all around you, you've been called—as many artists are in the beginning—by the names of other artists; for example, you've been called the Bob Dylan of the '70s, and so on. How do you react?*

That's like a joke. That's, like, funny. Anybody who falls for that, or says it.... At most, the comparison in the beginning was purely superficial. That's just a hook people hang on you. It's actually a disservice, to me and to him.

*Looking to what's going to happen after this tour, are you still writing songs, and in which direction do you think the music will go?*

I'm not a big one for thinking ahead for directions. When I sit down at the piano, I don't know what I'm going to do until I sit down. I don't sit in the bedroom for a half an hour and say, "Well, now I'm going to go in and write like this." I just sit down and do it. And that goes for everything else. I don't have any plans. I don't plan anything past the next few days at the most. I don't worry about next week or the week after, I don't even think about it.

As far as I'm concerned, it's never gonna come. With this whole "Am I ever gonna make it?"—as far as I was concerned, I was never going to make it. I went up to Columbia and figured I was never going to get a record. And then I never expected it to sell. I never figured I'd ever make it. Because I learned early, you get your hopes up and you're going to let down. Disappointed. You get disappointed a mess of times. Actually, when I was a kid I only got disappointed a few times. But I just learned right away: don't expect anything. Anybody that expects to make it is a fool. You make it if you make yourself make it. And making a lot of money is not making it; I ain't into making it that way. If I'm into making it at all, I ain't into making it to make money. I want to, like, *make it*: the kind of "make it" that has nothing to do with the bucks, or the kind of car, or whatever. I want to make it for myself. Which is the hardest thing to do, I guess, because I've never ever made it for myself. To myself. If that makes any sense. ➡



**Hiding on the**

# BACK OF THE SHEET

**NJ Collector Makes a Significant Springsteen Find**

**By Charles R. Cross**

AS RECENTLY AS TWO DECADES AGO, art dealers were still finding an occasional original Vincent Van Gogh painting stuck on the wall in some forlorn pension in rural France. Pablo Picasso's etchings seem to turn up all the time—sometimes they are hidden behind framing, or are actually on the back of other paintings. Throughout art history there are many examples of classic art that was discovered when restorers began cleaning paintings. Hidden behind the image we know may be a work that is far more important and powerful.

Rarely are hidden masterpieces found in the world of rock 'n' roll collectibles, but occasionally they do surface. Not long ago, a guy in Nashville bought the remnants of a storage warehouse only to find it was full of master tapes of country superstars. Within the segment of collecting that involves Bruce Springsteen, legend has it that the tape used for *The Ties That Bind* bootleg CD—one of the top-rated boot CDs of all-time—was found by a collector at a swap meet for \$20.

You can now add Mike Pfeifer's recent acquisition to the annals of great Bruce Springsteen finds. And though Pfeifer's collectible can't actually be heard the way a master tape could, his little piece of history speaks volumes about Springsteen's creative process and sheds light on one of the most

important periods of Bruce's recording career. This one small item ties together two of Springsteen's most loved albums—*Born to Run* and *Darkness on the Edge of Town*.

Pfeifer's tale begins with a small classified ad he'd placed in a collector's magazine six months ago. As a young collector of only 27 (born on Bruce's birthday, even), Pfeifer had missed the glory days of Springsteen's popularity, but he's been attempting to make up for lost time by building an impressive collection of his own. "I'm kind of late to Bruce collecting," he says, "which is both good and bad. Some stuff is really hard to find, and it's too expensive for me, but it's also true that there are some bargains out there now."

The ad Pfeifer ran pulled in what now looks to be quite a bargain. A record store owner in California responded to Pfeifer's classified by offering him some handwritten lyrics to a song called "River Horse." Pfeifer passed because these particular lyrics had changed hands several times through auction houses in the past few years (which he felt made them less desirable), and they were overpriced as well. "He was asking something like six grand for some insignificant lyrics," Pfeifer says. Though he declined on these lyrics, he still wanted to acquire something in Bruce's own hand, ideally a hand-

written lyric, which for many collectors is the ultimate item to frame and put on the wall.

The record store owner then offered Pfeifer another item that he said had actually been hanging on the wall of his store: the original handwritten liner notes that Springsteen penned for Southside Johnny's 1976 debut album, *I Don't Want to Go Home*. Though the liner notes weren't exactly the lyrics that Pfeifer was looking for, they were a one-of-a-kind item, and Pfeifer decided to take a chance on them.

He did what all novice collectors should do when buying something as rare as a handwritten lyric: he bought the item only on the condition that he could have them inspected by an expert and get a ruling on their authenticity. Though lyric forgeries used to be relatively rare, they have become increasingly common in recent years, fueled by the high prices that such collectibles now command. Pfeifer arranged to have the lyrics overnighted to him, and he brought them to Billy Smith of Walls of Fame (formerly of the Asbury Park Rock 'N' Roll Museum), a Springsteen expert and a contributor to *Backstreets*. "I told Mike not to pay for it until I authenticated it," Smith recalls. "Lately I've been seeing a lot of forged lyrics or faked signatures. With the



**"Miami Steve crossed that 'head shaved and just got out of jail' part out. I guess they figured that they didn't want Mad Dog to get mad at them."**

high value of handwritten lyrics at auctions these days—whether it's Bruce or any other significant writer—there have been more forgeries. There are quite a few bad ones out there. So you've got to be careful."

Pfeifer says that the instant he saw the Springsteen liner notes he knew that they were real, though he wanted to bring in an expert's opinion anyway. "You could tell by the age of them," he says. "They were in a real shabby frame. Still, I thought it was incredible when I first saw it. I'm not a huge Southside fan, so at first I was a little hesitant to order it. But, when I got it, and I had the album next to it, it really struck me as to how cool it was."

**SPRINGSTEEN ORIGINALLY WROTE** these words to tell the story behind Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes. At the time—in early 1976 when Southside's debut album was first released—they represented the first liner notes Springsteen had penned, and other than his songs and high school writings, one of the first times he'd publicly displayed his prose. As liner notes go, they are lengthy, taking up practically the entire back cover of the Southside album. The handwritten draft that Pfeifer obtained was three pages.

When Billy Smith first saw them, he, like Pfeifer, said he was sure they were original. "This is not the kind of thing that someone would try to fake," Smith says. Smith was

there was this place called the upstage club open 8pm to 5am on Cookland ave in Asbury Park it was run by this beat type guy named Tom Pether who plastered the walls with black light & pinups & showed 50's smokers between 1 & 5 to the 17 yr olds. It was a great place. You could work it so you never had to go home cause by the time you got outa there it was dark and you could just flop on the beach all day till 8 o'clock rolled around & you could run home before it got too light, nail your blankets over all the windows in your bedroom & just sleep straight through to the night. There are these guys in Mad dog, (Lopez, Big Daddy, Craig Margulies, (some of the) others) fast Eddie, Louie, Little brother, (some of the) others, plus the heavenly drummer of em all in terms of rock & roll & sheer impact. Big Daddy, Bobby Williams, King of hearts, he'd be the limit for ya every time all night. All names that you will probably never see on record unless this one but nonetheless names that should be spoken in reverence at least once not because they were great musicians (though some of em couldn't play a thing at all) but because they were each in their own way the living spirit of what some rock & roll is.

The first of three pages of Springsteen's handwritten draft.

well familiar with the Southside album and had long pondered what had happened to the original liner notes. "I had often wondered where those Southside notes must be, because I figured Bruce must have written out that stuff by hand, and it never materialized. So I figured that Bruce must have just handed it in, and it got thrown out," he said.

The liner notes themselves are of historical importance, Smith argues, because they represent one of the only times Springsteen has attempted to describe the Asbury Park music scene he himself came out of. "It's a significant story that he tells in those notes, because it's really the whole history of the local music scene up to that point," he says. "It was great to see it in his own hand with corrections in Miami Steve's hand."

One of the main reasons Smith was so

sure the liner notes were authentic was the addition of Miami Steve Van Zandt's writing between lines of the liner notes. Van Zandt's handwriting is not a style that most forgers would be familiar with, and it made sense that Steve would edit the notes. Though Van Zandt only added a few notes, his handwriting helped authentic the item.

Comparing the original notes to the ones used on the album, Smith and Pfeifer found only a few minor differences. "It was almost verbatim to what Bruce wrote on the back of the album, with a couple of exceptions," Smith recalls. "One of the exceptions was where Bruce had written 'Mad Dog' Lopez, and in parenthesis, had written 'head shaved and just got out of jail'; Miami Steve crossed that last part out. I guess they figured that they didn't want to get Mad Dog



There was this place called the Upstage Club, open 8 P.M. to 5 A.M. on Cookman Avenue in Asbury Park. There were a lotta musicians there 'cause the bands that came down from North Jersey and New York to play in the Top 40 clubs along the shore would usually end up there after their regular gig, along with a lotta different guys from the local areas. Everybody went there 'cause it was open later than the regular clubs and because between 1 and 5 in the morning you could play pretty much whatever you wanted, and if you were good enough, you could choose the guys you wanted to play with.

The Upstage was run by this beat type guy named Tom Potter who plastered the walls with black light and pin-ups and showed '50s smokers to the kids in between the bands. . . . It was a great place. He'd slip you five or ten bucks to sit in, and you could work it so you'd never have to go home, 'cause by the time you got out of there it was dawn and you could just flop on the beach all day, or you could run home before it got too light, nail the blankets over the windows of your room, and just sleep straight through till the night.

There were these guys. . . . Mad Dog Lopez, Big Danny, Fast Eddie Larachi, his brother Little John, Margaret & The Distractions (house band), Black Tiny, White Tiny, Miami Steve, and assorted E Streeters, plus the heaviest drummer of them all, in terms of both poundage and sheer sonic impact, Biiiiig Baaaaad Bobby Williams, badass king of hearts,

so tough he'd go the limit for you every time, all night. You will never see most of these names on another record besides this one, but nonetheless, they're names that should be spoken in reverence at least once, not 'cause they were great musicians (truth is, some of them couldn't play nothin' at all), but because they were each in their own way a living spirit of what, to me, rock 'n' roll is all about. It was music as survival, and they lived it down in their souls, night after night. These guys were their own heroes, and they never forgot.

Southside Johnny. . . . One of the weirdest guys I ever saw. He used to dress just like my old man. He was definitely comin' in from the outside. First time I saw him he was playin' bass behind one of the early legends in Asbury, a guy named Sonny Kenn. Johnny was terrible. This was a person that could not play the bass. But he could sing and play harp and he knew a lot about the blues. Once I talked to him, I realized he wasn't as weird as he looked. . . . he was weirder, and his general conversation consisted of insulting everyone within 50 feet. But he was the only white kid on the Jersey shore that you could stand to hear sing straight R&B five sets a night.

I brought up a lot of the past in these notes, and I hope Johnny don't mind, but I think it's time to bring it up before it's lost forever, because I know pretty soon it'll all be gone. So it's time to speak the names of the lost soldiers, 'cause the music on this album—Johnny's music

—is something that grew out of those friendships and the long summer nights when there was no particular place to go and nothing to do . . . except play.

All night long.

**"It's a significant story that Bruce tells in those notes, because it's really the whole history of the local music scene up to that point."**

WHAT PFEIFER AND SMITH HAD discovered on the back of the liner notes was a list of song titles that Springsteen had jotted down as a potential line-up for a fourth album, under the heading "Album IV." Eight songs—nine song titles, with one crossed out—were listed in

one grouping, and two were listed in another.

"These were clearly Bruce's notes on what songs he was thinking about putting on the follow-up to *Born to Run*," says Smith. "The significant thing is that it contained seven unknown songs, and that Bruce was thinking about the next album at that early point, when *Born to Run* was only a few months old." The timing of the list was perhaps the most important element

of it, because it suggests that Springsteen was considering a fourth album line-up far earlier than has previously been disclosed. Smith later spoke with the designer of the Southside Johnny album cover and found out that most of the artwork and liner notes were in production between February and March of 1976. "The chances are that Bruce wrote this list very early in 1976—probably in January or February."

But what was perhaps most shocking about the list was the appearance of one of the two songs that Pfeifer and Smith recognized. While they were mildly surprised to see "Frankie" listed as a potential song for the fourth album (it was seriously considered when the final line-up for *Darkness* was completed two years later), they were most shocked to see the sixth song listed: "Darkness on the Edge of Town."

"It proves that 'Darkness' was written much earlier than we had previously thought," Smith explains. "That it was more than likely written in 1975 and perhaps even toyed with for *Born to Run*. If he was writing it on a set list in early 1976, it may have been written in 1975; it's possible that 'Darkness

Springsteen's liner notes, as they appeared on the back of *I Don't Want to Go Home*.

mad at them. They must have figured that they couldn't be putting that in, that someone had just gotten out of jail. Other than that, it was just like the back of the album."

IT WAS IN THE CLOSE EXAMINATION OF Miami Steve's writing that Smith and Pfeifer found the "hidden" part of this collectible. When the two looked closely at the edge of the paper, they noticed that ink seemed to be coming through the back of the sheets.

"You could see through it that there were little pieces of writing showing," says Pfeifer. "When I first saw it, I said to my wife, jokingly, 'Maybe "Darkness" is written out on the other side.'" "Darkness on the Edge of Town" is Pfeifer's favorite Bruce Springsteen song.

Smith encouraged Pfeifer to remove the sheets from the old frame and to examine the back. When the two put the frame down

on the floor and removed the back, they found something that surprised them both.

"We opened it up and Billy started flipping each page," recalls Pfeifer. "And when he flipped the first page, I saw more of Bruce's writing, and I got this incredible jolt, thinking, 'What is it?' The anticipation was killing us all. The first thing I saw was the word 'Frankie.'"

On the back of two of the sheets were more notes by Little Steven—what appeared to be a budget for the production of the album. But on the back of the third sheet was more of Bruce Springsteen's writing. The writing only took up half a page, but it was definitely Springsteen's.

"And then I saw the words 'Album IV,'" Pfeifer continues, "and what went through my head in these few seconds was amazing. I thought *Darkness*. We were all speechless. It was a list of songs, but when we looked at the songs, we saw titles that no one had ever heard of before. It was unbelievable."



Albert IV

1. ~~Antonia~~ Penn Page  
2. House on Edge St. / the Edge of Penn "this night"  
3. Frankie  
4. ~~Walters~~ Walters Freight House ~~Roberts~~ ~~End of night~~  
5. Sears Drive-In  
6. Darkness on the Edge of  
7. Drifters Radio  
8. Your gonna Cry
1. Franky - 3:00  
2. Your gonna Cry - 4:00
- "These were clearly Bruce's notes on what songs he was

**“These were clearly Bruce’s notes on what songs he was thinking about putting on the follow-up to *Born to Run*.”**

### The big find: Springsteen's early planning of his fourth album.

on the Edge of Town' was really a *Born to Run* outtake."

For his part, Pfeifer was ecstatic since the value of his collectible had doubled in a split-second. But perhaps more importantly, he felt like he was closer to his favorite Bruce song. “I want to tell myself that this is the first draft of his line-up for the fourth record,” Pfeifer says. “And ‘Darkness’ is my very favorite song, which makes it even better. I was shocked that ‘Darkness’ was written that early. I’ve always thought that *Darkness* was Bruce’s favorite record and his favorite song. He always plays it. So maybe that’s because ‘Darkness’ was one of the first songs he wrote for this record.”

Other than “Darkness on the Edge of Town” and “Frankie” (which is listed, twice, once spelled “Franky”), the other titles were ones that were unfamiliar to both Pfeifer and Smith. They included: “Ramona,” crossed out and replaced by “Dawn Patrol,” “House on Eden St./The Edge of Town This Night,” “Walkin’ with the Man,” “Texas Drive-In,” “Drifter’s Barrio,” and “Your Gonna Cry” (sic), which, like “Frankie,” was listed twice. Most likely “Frankie” and “Your Gonna Cry” are listed separately because they were songs Springsteen was considering as singles. In the sec-


and listing he included times for these two numbers, (3:00 for "Franky," 4:00 for "Your Gonna Cry") which suggest he wanted to keep them a proper length for radio play. The times also suggest that these songs were at least written at this point, if not recorded.

Though Smith says it's hard to know from this list whether these songs had been recorded by February of 1976—Springsteen has through his career made lists of possible album line-ups, and several have leaked to the collector's market—they were all certainly at least written in some kind of demo form. "I was surprised that we had never seen any of the titles before," he says. "We'd never heard of any of them, other than 'Frankie' and 'Darkness.' Next to 'Walking with the Man' Bruce has something with a 'French horn' written there which I thought could have had something to do with 'Meeting Across the River' which also had French horn on it. I wish we could find tapes of these songs. But at this point they might have only been played in the living room."

Only Springsteen himself knows for sure—and Pfeifer would be eager to prod

Bruce's memory on this one piece of memorabilia. "I'd love to ask him about it if I ever bump into him, to see what he was thinking when he wrote this," Pfeifer says. "He might not even remember any of it."

Though Pfeifer has already built an impressive collection—including some early posters from the Steel Mill days—the liner notes are now his most prized possession. “To me it has its own little story behind it. There are so many possibilities. It might help uncover a whole bunch of songs that don’t exist. It was such an incredible surprise.”

The only problem the discovery causes for Pfeifer is how best to display this two-sided collectible. His compromise: A really good photocopy for one of the pages of the liner notes, which allows him to put the "Album IV" sheet in front of a frame, no longer hidden to the world. 



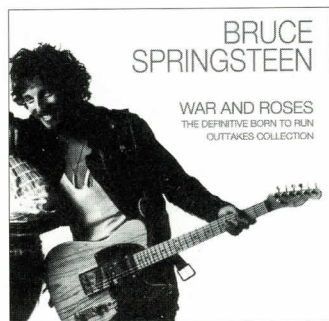
E St. scores again

## Primo *Born to Run* Outtakes

By Richard Breton

For the benefit of our readers, *Backstreets* magazine provides ratings of unauthorized releases currently in circulation. Don't write us asking where these can be obtained. *Backstreets* in no manner, shape, or form endorses these recordings. These reviews are provided by our columnists solely for informational purposes. Despite these words of warning, some collectors will still seek this material out, and for those collectors, our reviews should help you steer clear of the real losers.

Unauthorized CDs are growing in numbers and with that growth, expect some real rip-offs—our advice is let the buyer beware, and demand to listen to material before you buy it. Each title here has been rated for packaging, performance, and sound quality on a scale from one to ten, one being awful, and ten being quality generally found on legitimate releases.



### •War and Roses: The Definitive Born to Run Outtakes Collection

(E. St.)

73 minutes

Packaging: 9

Sound Quality: 7-9

Performance: 9

E. St. Records has made a reputation for releasing fine studio outtake sets with the best sound possible, which in most cases surpasses the circulating tapes of the material. Their *Definitive Darkness Outtakes Collection* and both volumes of their *Definitive River Outtakes Collection* set the

standards for sound, packaging and fairly comprehensive track lists. Now E. St. tackles the studio outtakes from the *Born to Run* album, and they've struck gold again.

Nearly all of these outtakes from the *Born to Run* album have been out on CD before—most notably on Scorpio's *Born in the Studio*, the only relatively comprehensive *Born to Run* outtakes disc previously available—but not all on one CD and not quite at this level of sound quality. The "Chrissy" version of "Thunder Road," "She's the One" with different lyrics, and the solo acoustic take of "Thunder Road" have never sounded better. Neither have the unreleased gems like "A Love So Fine," "Linda Let Me Be the One" and "Lovers in the Cold." There are even a few outtakes that have never been released before, including different takes of "Thunder Road," "Backstreets" and "Meeting Across the River," which is listed under its original title, "The Heist."

Of course, one of the problems with studio outtake collections is that you can hear firsthand why some versions never made it to the album. While it might be interesting to hear great-sounding versions of "Born to Run" with a female background chorus or "Backstreets" with strings the first time through, the arrangements leave a lot to be desired; it's doubtful you'll want to listen to them again any time soon, let alone repeatedly.

Three or four different sources were used to assemble all the tracks on this set, so the sound quality does vary. But you'd be hard pressed to find better-sounding versions of any of these songs. And it's great to have them all on one CD.

E. St. continually improves its packaging, and this set is no exception. They successfully mimic the style of the official *Born to Run* album and even went the extra mile by using gold

printing to great effect, making this one of the most attractive sets I've seen. Recommended.

### •The Bruce Springsteen Story Volume 6: Dance, Dance, Dance

(E. St.)

60 minutes

Packaging: 7

Sound Quality: 9

Performance: 9

E. St. Records also has a reputation for releasing some of the rarest live material, some of which has never circulated among tape traders before. Their last big find was the previous title in this series, *The Bruce Springsteen Story Volume 5: Doctor Zoom and the Sonic Boom*—an uncirculated soundboard of the May 14, 1971 show from the Sunshine Inn in Asbury Park. Now they've come up with an even better find.

This July 23rd 1971 show from Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center, in New York City has never appeared on any setlist compilations before. To top it off, there are some new unreleased songs included that have never even been rumored to exist. This is a Bruce Springsteen Band show; the Dr. Zoom line-up has been trimmed down slightly, with an extra horn and some female vocalists added, and the "big band" arrangements are as jazzy as ever. Little Steven plays some fine slide guitar throughout this set. The band line-up includes Vini Lopez (drums), Garry Talent (bass), Steve Van Zandt (guitar), David Sancious (keyboard), Danny Federici (organ), Harvey Cherlin (trumpet), Bobby Feigenbaum (saxophone), Delores Holmes (lead & background vocals) and Barbara Dinkins (background vocals).

A slow blues arrangement of "C.C. Rider" starts things out, and it eventually morphs into a big band number with various instruments taking a solo spot. Holmes and Dinkins add much to "You Mean So Much to Me,"

with an arrangement that sounds closer to the Southside Johnny and Ronnie Spector version recorded years later. This is followed by "C'mon Billy, Break Out the Wine," "I'm In Love Again" and "Dance Dance Dance." Holmes sings the lead vocal on "You Don't Leave Me Much Choice," while Bruce plays soulful guitar fills. The set ends with what could be the finest version of Bruce's "Jambalaya" ever.

It's hard to believe this soundboard tape is from '71, because the sound is fantastic. It had clearly been lovingly preserved all these years until E. St. carefully mastered this on CD, with virtually no tape hiss to speak of. This is vintage Bruce material. Recommended.

### •Home of the Champions

(Doberman, 3CD-R)

193 minutes

Packaging: 6

Sound Quality: 7

Performance: 8

Doberman was probably one of the very first labels to release titles using CD-Rs exclusively. At over 20 Bruce titles released so far, with more on the way, they've established themselves as one of the most prolific CD-R labels as well. That being said, there have always been a few drawbacks with Doberman: their production runs have been limited to 100 or less, with emphasis on the "less"; they charge more for their titles than other labels (the cheapest I've ever seen a 3CD set from Doberman go for is \$80, and the prices rise from there); and their releases to date have rarely been exemplary in terms of sound or packaging. One would be tempted to pretty much ignore their output, but it was just a matter of time until they released something worthwhile.

*Home of the Champions* is taken from the fine June 28, 1988 *Tunnel of Love* show from Feyenoord Stadium, Rotterdam, Holland. Highlights include a first set with



six songs from *Tunnel*, the first performances of "Chimes of Freedom" and "Paradise by the 'C'" since the *Darkness* tour, the premiere of the new "Don't You Touch That Thing" story-song to intro "You Can Look (But You Better Not Touch)," "Because the Night," a great take of "Born to Be Wild" within "Light of Day," and the last "Have Love Will Travel" of the tour. The crowd singing along to "Bobby Jean" actually raises it above average as well.

As analog audience tapes go, this one is pretty decent. You'll hear plenty from this crowd, especially given Holland's soccer championship victory—hence the set's title. Any time there's a break in the show for 15 seconds or more, the entire stadium erupts into their victory chant. It's fun to hear an audience excited, but the obvious downside of the loud crowd is that they can be, and are, obtrusive at several points during this set. There are some folks that can be heard talking during certain quieter moments, and at least one person who sings along with Bruce on a couple of songs.

The sound does vary overall, though it doesn't distort—despite the fact that the taper fiddled with the volumes every so often, slightly boosting the quieter songs but not reducing them before louder songs began. The sound also suffers from what I like to call the "stadium effect," where any stiff breeze, obstruction, or minor movement of the mics can change the sound. And because it is an analog recording, there are a few breaks when the tape gave out at several points during the show. But when you have a show with minimal, if any, breaks between songs, it's hard to avoid. Luckily, there are probably only two spots where it happened mid-song.

The packaging is nice, but it's not professionally printed; this could have looked better. The CD-R discs themselves are nothing to speak of. This isn't a Crystal Cat or E. St. release, so you shouldn't expect near-perfection here. But one thing Doberman is doing right is releasing CDs from such an under-represented tour: unfortunately, bootlegs from the *Tunnel* tour are few and far between, to say the least. While it's far from perfect, this set

should tide you over until a label like Crystal Cat or E. St. decides to release another '88 show.



•**Paris Night**  
(Crystal Cat, 2CD)  
153 minutes  
Packaging: 7  
Sound Quality: 10  
Performance: 9

There have been so many releases from every leg of *The Ghost Of Tom Joad* tour that it has almost become a chore to decide which are worth getting. Between releases of entire shows and various compilations, you'd think the bootleggers would have reached a point of critical mass at which the market couldn't support another release. But when Bruce decided to do a final leg through Europe this past spring after receiving the Polar Music Prize in Stockholm, I just knew another round of releases was in the cards.

Don't get me wrong; I saw some fine shows during the course of the tour. It's been the longest Bruce tour ever, spanning about a year and a half, albeit with a few lengthy breaks. But after a while, there was a sameness to certain portions of the shows that I longed for Bruce to disrupt by throwing a curve. Sometimes he did, but many times he didn't.


This set is taken from the May 25, 1997 show at the Palais Des Congres in Paris. As *Tom Joad* releases go, this one has several things going for it: it's the last show of the tour; at over two-and-a-half hours it's one of the longest shows of the tour; it contains solid performances of many songs, a few of which haven't shown up on many other releases; Elliott Murphy appears with Bruce on a couple of songs; Kevin Buell finally gets a mention on the packaging; and—Paris Night's biggest strength—the sound is absolutely

phenomenal for an audience DAT recording.

The set starts off on the first disc sounding like a pretty normal show for this tour. The performances are fine, but then again many other sets have the same fine songs. However, the versions of "For You," "The River" and, surprisingly, "Dry Lightning" are exceptional. "Red Headed Woman" is quite a bit different this time around too, and Bruce loosens up considerably on this song—maybe a bit too loose, as he screws up the end. "Born in the U.S.A." continues to be a sonic tour-de-force, especially given the clear sound found here. And "Youngstown" is back in the set.

The second disc contains the fine "Diamonds by the Yard" with lead vocal by Murphy and the duet finale on "Blowin' Down the Road." There's also a fun "Working on the Highway" with audience sing-along. The performances are solid for the most part, but, with the possible exception of the "Blowin' Down the Road" duet, nothing can truly be defined as exceptional. The only real low point in the set is when some annoying girl from the audience actually goes up on the stage after "The Line" and stays there for the whole of "Balboa Park" (though it doesn't seem to affect Bruce's performance). The end of disc two adds several minutes of the music played over the PA system as the audience filed out—a nice touch.

Some have reported *Paris Night* as having a soundboard source, and there's been some debate over the matter. But while it's an easy and understandable mistake to make, it's just not true. What is true is that the taper had a prime taping seat and the right equipment: the sound, though it is an audience tape, rivals that of the best radio broadcasts and maybe even official releases. And with an average length of over 76 minutes, each of these two discs are about as full of that great sound as they can get.

Now we come down to the question: could you live without this set? Probably. Would you be missing some exceptional performances? Sure. Would you be missing what is quite probably the best sounding "Tom Joad" tour bootleg overall? Yes. The decision is yours. 

## the backstreets jukebox

### 1. Various Artists *No Nukes*

Elektra/Asylum (2CD)

### 2. Murder City Devils *Murder City Devils*

Die Young Stay Pretty (CD)

### 3. The Beach Boys *The Pet Sounds Sessions*

Capitol (4CD)

### 4. Wayne Hancock *That's What Daddy Wants*

Ark 21 (CD)

### 5. The Replacements *Nothing For All*

Reprise (CD)

### 6. Bruce Springsteen *The River*

Columbia (CD)

### 7. Frente *Shape*

Mammoth/Atlantic (CD)

### 8. The Louvin Brothers *Satan is Real*

Capitol (CD)

### 9. Whiskeytown *Strangers Almanac*

Outpost (CD)

### 10. Nanci Griffith *Once in a Very Blue Moon*

Philo/Rounder (CD)

**10**  
**Monster**  
**Discs to Play Today**  
**and Everyday**



Benefit contributions from Bruce abound

## Sweet Charity

By Christopher Phillips

**W**ith the season for giving upon us, Springsteen has taken the holiday spirit to heart. No, he's not giving his fans a new album yet, but his songs are cropping up on charity compilations left and right.

Foremost is the high-profile *Diana, Princess of Wales—Tribute*, a compilation benefitting the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and actually released on the Fund's own label (distributed by Sony/Columbia). *Tribute* is a 2CD set with 13 of its tracks previously unreleased; unfortunately, Springsteen's isn't one of them. His contribution, "Streets of Philadelphia," may be nothing new, but in addition to its mournful tone, it makes a good deal of thematic sense considering Diana's AIDS charity work.

Bruce's two Christmas songs, which have been staples of various holiday compilations for years, are making appearances yet again this year on two new charity discs. Epic's *Superstar Christmas* includes "Merry Christmas Baby" among its 16 tracks, with all proceeds benefitting the T.J. Martell Foundation for Leukemia, Cancer and AIDS Research. "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town" can be found on *Sounds of the Season*, a Columbia benefit album for the Children's Hearing Institute.

"Glory Days" appears on a new charity collection of baseball songs and spoken-word pieces, which also includes performances from Dan Bern, Bob Costas, Bob Dylan and others. The CD, *Diamond Cuts*, was put together by Hungry for Music, a Washington D.C.-based charity organization. The collection will be available in most major and minor league ballparks; you can also call 1-888-843-0933, or contact Hungry for Music, 2020 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Ste. 384, Washington, D.C. 20006.

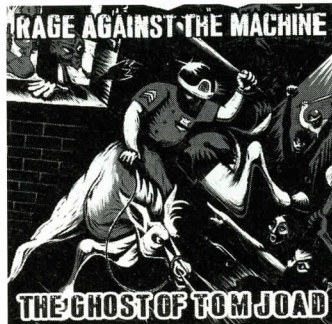
Even a long-awaited re-release goes to benefit a cause, as pro-

ceeds from sales of *No Nukes* are still distributed through the MUSE fund. The see-sawing status of the *No Nukes* CD landed abruptly on the good side this fall; shortly after we went to press with the last column reporting that *No Nukes* had been postponed indefinitely, the 1979 live set actually hit the shelves. For the 3LP set's first digital release, Elektra has preserved the original track listing—including Springsteen's "Stay" and "Devil With the Blue Dress Medley"—fitting it onto two CDs with neither omissions nor extra tracks. The discs come in a slim double jewelbox with the increasingly common (and needlessly wasteful) cardboard slipcase.

Elektra went the extra mile in the mastering process, using the HDCD (High Definition Compatible Digital) system. HDCD is a method of high quality, high definition analog-to-digital conversion that helps retain more of the original warmth and could partly account for the delay of the *No Nukes* set.

Speaking of new technology, Springsteen's *Video Anthology: 1978-1988*, which has been available for years on videocassette and laser disc, has just been reissued by Sony on DVD (Digital Versatile Disc). It isn't quite time to chuck your CDs—especially since the DVD players play them—but a new format is upon us: DVD allows for storage of many hours of digital audio and video on a single CD-sized disc. Whether it goes the way of Beta-max remains to be seen.

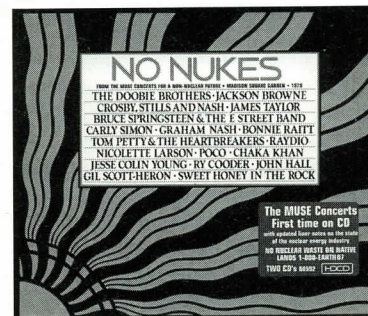
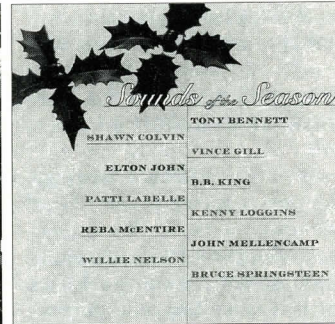
The first collection from the Bridge Benefit shows, *The Bridge School Concerts, Vol. One*, features material from each of the annual concerts going back to 1986. While Springsteen, who has played the benefit twice, is not represented here, Nils Lofgren fans will be happy with the inclusion of "Believe," where Nils was joined by Bridge Benefit mastermind Neil Young. Since Springsteen's performances at these concerts have been unquestion-



able highlights, it can only be assumed that label conflicts kept him off this set; with any luck, a future volume will make up for it.

An interesting packaging of Springsteen 7-inch singles has hit the shelves from Collectables. The company apparently bought up leftover stock of 45s with rights to press more if necessary; Collectables then compiled these singles into boxed sets. The first Springsteen box, *Bruce Springsteen: A Career Retrospective*, consisted of 15 singles. After the first box quickly sold out, Collectables put together *Retrospective Versions 2 and 3*, each of which contain nine records with no cross-over, for a total of 18 different singles between the two new sets. The boxes themselves are somewhat plain—black cardboard with simple printed labels—but they are a good way to get many of these out-of-print singles and may provide vinyl collectors with interesting variations. Some have orange labels and some have gray labels, some with the "Collectables" imprint in addition to "Columbia." While the first box contained some with picture sleeves, the second and third volumes do not.

More 7-inch records of interest are now available from The Right Stuff/EMI-Capitol: jukebox singles from the *One Step Up/Two Steps Back* compilation. Initially, the label released four singles, representing eight of the artists from the tribute project: Kurt Neumann/Woolridge Brothers; The Smithereens/Bumpin' Uglies;



Ben E. King/Mrs. Fun with Tina & the B-Side Movement; and Marshall Crenshaw/The Knack. The label recently announced plans to issue two more 45s from the project, to be available in January 1998: John Hiatt/The Yell Leaders; and Joe Cocker/Paul Cebal. A second CD single, the follow-up to the CD5 for Kurt Neumann's "Atlantic City," has been delayed until early 1998 as well.

Rage Against the Machine's nearly unrecognizable version of "The Ghost of Tom Joad," which they began performing live this year, has made it on to disc. A studio version on a one-track CD is packaged as a bonus with Rage Against the Machine's new video release (which kicks off with a live video clip of the Springsteen song as well). The disc's picture sleeve features nice artwork of "a cop beatin' a guy."

*The Music of Bruce Springsteen*, an odd instrumental album of Springsteen songs, appeared earlier in the UK. While this CD may be difficult to find, it sounds like it may not be worth the effort—aside from those desperately seeking a pan-pipe version of "Tougher Than the Rest."



# CLASSIFIEDS

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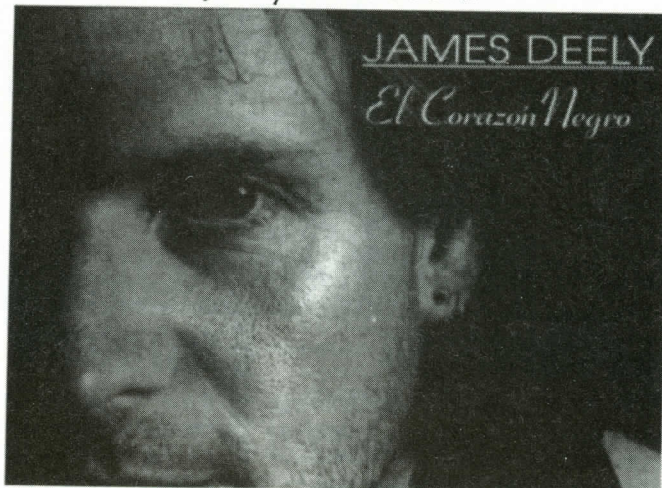


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## Continued from page 5

can listen to repeatedly that still retains its power. I think Bruce made a mistake on the other songs on *Joad* when he stripped them of melody and limited them basically to solo acoustic performances. Does Bruce not realize the ability his music has to enhance the power of his lyrics, as I believe the music and musicianship on *Nebraska Live* does? I This doesn't mean I want a "Hungry Heart" beat to "Sinaloa Cowboys," but perhaps an additional guitar, accordion, fiddle, or some percussion would have been nice. If Bruce puts out a book of poetry, I would buy it, read it, and I would enjoy it, as I do all of his lyrics. When he puts out an album, though, I want to buy it, listen to it, and enjoy it. I always have a greater appreciation of Bruce's lyrics when I have a powerful musical connection with the song.

The great singer and songwriter John Hiatt once said, "You've got to inhabit the right sonic space for the song to resonate with any meaning." For me, Bruce's songs have always resonated with more meaning and feeling when backed by the E Street Band. I don't think all of Bruce's work without them is bad—I think it is quite good, and some of it is exceptional. I guess I want to have my cake and eat it too: I want Bruce to follow his muse and record as his muse directs him, yet I get this feeling, especially when I listen to *Nebraska Live*, that Bruce's "solo" efforts would have been better with the E Street Band.

**Art Archambeau**  
Rochester, NY

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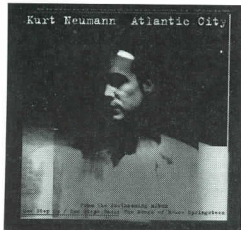


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**TOM JOAD LIMITED EDITION JAPANESE 2CD SET** Released to coincide with Springsteen's shows in Tokyo is this fantastic limited release, combining *The Ghost of Tom Joad* album with the "Missing" CD5 (see below for track listing). The two CDs are housed in fantastic packaging, a nice cardboard digipak with a "Missing" sticker, lyrics in both English and Japanese, plus an integrated obi.....\$40

**EURO "MISSING" CD5** The main feature here is the previously unreleased "Missing," but the three b-sides make this the best Joad single yet. Three live acoustic tracks are taken from Berlin: "Darkness," "Spare Parts," and "Born in the USA".....\$14

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**UK SECRET GARDEN CD5 #3** Two more Secret Garden singles are just out from the UK, combining previously released studio tracks with tracks from the Blood Brothers CD. Unique PS. Secret Garden/Missing/High Hopes/The Ghost of Tom Joad.....\$12

**UK SECRET GARDEN CD5 #4** As above, with unique PS. Tracks: Secret Garden (strings)/Blood Brothers (rock version)/Streets of Philly/Highway 29.....\$12

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**FOR TRUE ROCKERS ONLY** Back issues of *FTRO*, the UK Boss fanzine from our friends at Badlands. Issue #20 was the last issue before Badlands began publishing *The Ties That Bind*, below. *FTRO* #10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, each.....\$8

**THE TIES THAT BIND** The new Bruce mag from our friends at Badlands, basically a smaller version of *FTRO* that will appear more often. #1, #2, #3, the double issue #4/5, #6 and the new issue #7 are now available.....\$4 each, \$8 for double issue

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#1 First issue, extremely rare.....\$50

#2 November 1978.....\$15

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#6/7 double issue.....\$12

#8 new issue.....\$12

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**JOAD TOURBOOK** For anyone who missed it on the tour, the official tourbook for the World Acoustic Tour '95-'96 is available through Backstreet Records. A beautiful 32-page book, very colorful and packed with photos (including many shots of Bruce only found in this book), plus song lyrics, an interview with Bruce, and Steve Sutherland's story on the tour from *New Musical Express*.....\$20

**'92-93 WORLD TOURBOOK** This official 32-page color program features stunning color photos of Bruce on-stage and off. Profiles on each of the '92-93 band members. Glossy cover, matte pages.....\$10

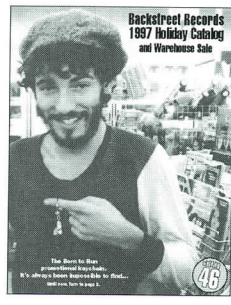
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